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DUKE CHRISTIAN

OF

LUNEBURG.

VOL. I.

So dear to Heaven is saintly purity,
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear dream and solemn vision,
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants,
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.

MILTON.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

DUKE CHRISTIAN

OF

LUNEBURG;

OR,

TRADITION FROM THE HARTZ.

Honi soit qui mal y pense!

Alles für Gott und Sie.

By Miss JANE PORTER,

AUTHOR OF "THADDEUS OF WARSAW,"

&c. &c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

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PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1824.

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TO

HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

GEORGE THE FOURTH,

KING OF

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND,

THE UNITED BRITISH EMPIRE,

KING OF HANOVER,

DUKE OF BRUNSWICK AND LUNEBURG,

DEFENDER OF THE FAITH,

&c. &c. &c. &c.

SIRE,

THIS little traditionary sketch of an illustrious hero, is most gratefully laid at your Majesty's feet; by one who, feeling that romance may be to the present times what the song of the bard was to ages past — the memorial of de-

parted excellence, the inspiration of virtues to come! — in seeking such an exemplar for her story, found it in the House of Brunswick.

Then succeeded the delight to real patriotism, of tracing the glory of England, in the ancestors of her Sovereign — the hereditary descent of the royal virtues, which for nearly two centuries have sealed the Magna Charta of Great Britain — the spirit of protection, rather than of conquest — the magnanimous heart, curbing the brave hand. The parental vigilance, which presides over an empire with the comprehensive care of a father in the bosom of his family.

The loyal and the upright, obeying the sceptre of this equal law, possess their homes in peace and prosperity; while the Sword of Justice, when compelled to be drawn against the disturbers of the common-weal, has ever been tempered by the present gracious hand that holds it, with a compassion which, in conformity with the Divine example — wills not the death, but the reformation of the offender.

Thus, in being ruled by a monarch, who in times of the most signal continental difficulties, whether in the cabinet or the field, carries the same "quality of mercy" into all his relations abroad, who so well

understands how to make his name great, and his people happy, the British nation finds itself the honoured of the world. And naturally as the mirror reflects its object, all born under such auspices must share the grateful devotion, the profound loyalty, which animates the respect of her, who has now the honour, by

The most gracious permission,
To subscribe herself,
Sire,
Your Majesty's
Very dutiful, faithful, and obedient
Servant and Subject,
JANE PORTER.

Long Ditton,
Jan. 26. 1824.

INTRODUCTION.

History gives the grand outline of events,—but only like a general map of some vast country, which requires minuter tracts to shew its roads and passes. If we wish to know the particulars of any celebrated person's life,—those smaller occurrences deemed too domestic, or too insignificant for the dignity of history, though probably the springs of its most important actions,—we must seek them in private archives, and the long-neglected annals of the times.

In those old and circumstantial details, the reader may, indeed, be sure of meeting much irrelevant, and more tedious matter; but he is not the less certain to discover that which will awaken his interest, and sometimes explain, in the simplest

and most unsuspected way, the deepest mysteries of the politician. For besides presenting the great objects of public chronicles, these familiar narrators shew how the least are often connected with the greatest; how the fortunes of private persons may turn on events, which, from their lofty aspect, seemed commissioned with nothing beneath a nation's destiny; and how the fates of the highest individuals may be decided by accidents apparently trivial. In short, in these plain-speaking records of times and families, we find as striking a difference in the appearance of the persons they treat of, from the unbending stateliness of their representation in history, as a Roman citizen might have seen between the statue of Germanicus in the forum, and Germanicus discoursing with him under its shadow. Here human actions are placed as they occur, without any artificial effects from light and shade. The faithful penman had no ambition but to

relate what he saw; and he noted it down day by day in the patrimonial hall, where the heroes, who were his subjects, passed hourly before him, coming in from the chace, or going forth to the battle; or, during whiles of repose from both, drew around the hospitable hearth, in domestic simplicity, amidst their families, and friends, and ancient servants. Thus finding in the noble names he tells of, however illustrious from birth or fame, the tenderest human dependencies; and human frailties also, mingling with their virtues; we no longer consider them with the cold speculation of beings of another sphere, but feel them brothers of our nature; in whose joys or sorrows we may sympathise, and whose moral victories, or defeats, may therefore excite our emulation, or affect us with their warning. Nay, more,—we every where read the great religious truth, that "the fortune of man is the providence of God," who, governing all by the admirable chain of this mutual

dependence, proves to our understanding and our heart, that with the Sovereign of the universe, there is no real distinction between men but what virtue makes; and while the order of creation demands subordination of uses, whether in the stars or in men, He gives the sceptre to the prince, and the ploughshare to the peasant. Hence, it neither becomes the one to contemn, nor the other to repine; every man having his talent and his duty; and he best deserves the meed of honour, who best fulfils his trust.

These reflections arose while turning over a few volumes of those hereditary and veritable chroniclers, whose works had withstood the worm for many generations. Some were printed, others in manuscript; German, French, and English, lying together on the same mouldering shelf, like hostile heroes sharing the same pile. Dark as the cemetery was, the deeds of its illustrious dead hovered in bright light over their ashes. And if the page which

now attempts to recall their luminous examples, achieve that distinction, and is afterwards permitted to fall into honourable dust by the side of their early historians, the hand which writes it, and collects from such respected materials the memorials of a noble cause, will not have laboured in vain. Venerable men! ye wrote for your generation; we for ours: still inculcating the same lesson, from the same root; as successive fruit and foliage spring from one stem, to nourish and to shelter many a succeeding race of man.

ADDRESS

From the Old Chronicler to his Readers.

In the same packet with some of the domestic documents from which the following narrative has been collected, a brief historical account was found; and as it seemed originally put there to elucidate the more private matters of the corresponding papers, its insertion here may not be less necessary.

"Methinks it will be considered a useful herald to the actions recorded within, to recall to the memory of whoever may hereafter look upon these documents, the relative situations of the countries, and celebrated personages, herein consigned to the judgment of posterity.

"Since the reign of Charlemagne, no sovereign united so many extensive territories, and approached so near a uni-

versal monarchy as Charles the Vth of Germany. By inheritance from his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian I., he possessed the provinces of the Low-Countries, which constituted the kingdom of Burgundy; the Tyrol, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola; and, in brief, all the realms which lie between the Danube and the head of the Venetian sea. Besides these, and the extra dominion he derived in quality of Emperor of Germany, he inherited the crown of Spain and its rich dependancies, in right of his mother. But on his demise, dividing this enormous territory, he allotted the German partition to his brother Ferdinand, and bestowed Spain, with the Netherlands, upon his son Philip. Ferdinand, by marriage, soon after added the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary to his moiety; and, as he left it, his posterity determined to maintain it.

"But during these two successive reigns of Charles and Ferdinand, com-

menced, and continued in rapid progress, that change in the religious opinions of men, which not only terminated in the acknowledgment of a free judgment in matters of faith, but occasioned the establishment of certain civil rights amongst the people and their rulers, which finally dismembered the empire.

"For some centuries before this period, the moral and religious ignorance of princes and their guides, held the world in the most deplorable vassalage, and degree of human wretchedness.—Passion and power were the only dictators. Men saw no law but their own wills, or the strong arm of force, which compelled them within the bonds of another's.—That there was a God above, most of them confessed; and to conciliate his favour, many of them made vows of penance, or endowed monasteries; but none found it requisite to curb a passion, or restrain an appetite, while the erection of a church, or the shaving of his head,

could atone for the one or the other.—Nay, so sealed were the eyes of the people, and so worse than blind those who professed to lead them aright, that the Eternal's forgiveness for every species of crime, was sold at a public mart,—in short, pardons on account of sins committed, and indulgences for the perpetration of any yet to come. Pope Leo X. was the strenuous supporter of this impious traffic,—simony, indeed, in rankest form. A free-thinker himself, if not an absolute deist, he cared little for the honour of a religion he professed, without truly believing; and as long as its abuse afforded the means for himself, and those like unto him, to amass wealth for their pleasures, neither he nor they cast a thought on the present moral welfare, or possible eternal doom of mankind. *Eat, drink, for to-morrow we perish!* was the virtual creed of the times.

"In the midst of the storm of human vices, which this unwarrantable licence set

at large, real religion was not left without a witness. Wickcliffe and Huss had pleaded her cause to former generations: Luther now rose in her defence. He brought the scriptures to the people in a language they could understand; and drawing a parallel between the pure doctrines of Christianity, and the monstrous immoralities sanctioned by papal Rome, told his auditors to make their own inference. Common sense gave the anticipated reply; and those who believed it their interest to hold men in error, armed force against reason. The traffickers in the indulgences especially, and others profiting by equally abominable scandals on the church, lost no time in alarming the heads of the Catholic governments with unfair representations of the new opinions; accusing Luther, as evil men formerly did the physician of Alexander, of aiming at a vital part, when he only meant to cut away the disease in corruption.

" Both Charles V. and his brother Ferdinand, with the Elector of Bavaria, obeyed the impulse of these false witnesses. But all the princes of Germany were not so misled. The conquest of the Greek empire about this time by the Turks, had driven the remains of its ancient learning, with its yet existing professors, to take shelter in Italy; and the discovery of printing meeting the favourable juncture, the consequent diffusion of knowledge enabled the nobles and people of western Christendom, not merely to understand the arguments for religious purity, but to comprehend and appreciate the advantages of civil liberty. The result was, to desire a system of legal mutual restraint, instead of the uncertain remedies in use,—intestine warfare, or the partial awards of feudal decisions.

" Under these impressions, the Elector of Saxony, with the Palatine of the Rhine, and the Duke of Brunswick Lu-

neburg, were the most eminent protectors of the great reformist. The latter prince, indeed, was the first in Germany who publicly established the purified faith and ritual in his dominions. A severe decree of Charles V. against all persons professing this faith, being answered by a protest signed by these princes, and several others besides, from that period the followers of Luther took the name of Protestants. This act was succeeded by a fair promulgation of their creed, given before the Emperor at Augsburgh; wherein the argument was considered so conclusive by even an enemy, that a Catholic bishop started from his seat, and exlaimed, — "We must abolish these opinions, or they will abolish ours!"

"By this test the emperors and their partisans continued to shape their actions, accordingly as they were able to oppose, or to detach, either the Lutheran sovereigns of Europe, or the Protestant princes of the empire, from the general cause.

Amongst its proselytes were numbered the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, England and Scotland. France, too, appeared on the eve of the same day; and Switzerland openly declared for the apostle of Geneva.

"In the midst of the contest, Charles took a signal revenge on the electoral house of Saxony, for its prominent share in the revolution of religion: he transferred its dignities to a collateral and hostile branch.

"Reader, thou must call to remembrance, that the father, and grandfather of John Frederick Elector of Saxony, did not follow only the Duke of Brunswick Luneburg, in openly espousing Luther, but assisted Melancthon with all their influence, political and personal, in the propagation of his doctrines; and in consequence of their son and successor John Frederick shewing the same zeal, but with less effective judgment in maintaining

his power, the emperor laid a plan to transfer it to his own side.

"The situation of the house of Saxony was in this wise: descended from Albert of Brandenburg, surnamed the Bear; it consisted of two branches from one stem; a prince, who lord of the whole, but having two sons, divided his dominions between them. To Ernest the eldest, he bequeathed the larger portion, under the denomination of the Electorate; to Albert the younger, he consigned the less considerable, with the title of Duke. — Hence originated the double houses of Saxony, and the corresponding rivalry of their posterity, which at last became so kindless, between such near kindred, that the electoral family had only to announce itself the protector of Luther, for the ducal family to immediately declare itself the enemy of all his partisans. To avenge himself, then, against the elector John Frederick, the son of him who had so

constantly defended the person and precepts of the reformer, the emperor required no more than to stimulate the ambition and high warlike talents of Maurice, the young Duke of Saxony. Stratagem assisted open attack; the elector was provoked to take arms, was defeated, made prisoner, and his birthright transferred to his kinsman, the instrument of his overthrow. The despoiled prince was allowed the little territory of Saxe Gotha and Weimar, to be settled on his two sons; while himself, held a captive for life in a remote castle on the Danube, espoused in his old age the daughter of the wild predatory Baron Grumbach, his fellow-prisoner.—He left an infant son by this woman; in after years hardly acknowledged by his brothers as of their blood, but inheriting all the pride of his father's house, with the remorseless thirst for vengeance derived from his mother's.

"Maurice having gained his object in

acquiring the sole command of Saxony, and being in his heart a Lutheran, immediately embraced the protestant side; and dying in a successful field, bequeathed his dominions to his brother Augustus. The new elector ardently trod in the same reformed path; which the succeeding pages will show; while the empire saw many changes after the demise of Charles V. and his brother-successor.

"He left two sons, Maximilian II., who succeeded him, and granted to the protestants the famous edict called *The Peace of Religion;* and Charles, created Duke of Styria, who became father to the Ferdinand of that country, whose dark proceedings overshadow many a record in this register.

"Maximilian, himself a Lutheran in every thing but openly avowing his faith, was married to a Spanish princess; to whom, incautiously, he resigned the education of his sons Rodolph and Matthias; both of whom afterwards succeeded

him in the empire:—and during their reigns the chief events in these pages occur.

"Of these two princes it may justly be said, that Rodolph, as Emperor of Germany, was a sovereign of better heart than head. Tolerant from inclination, and example of his father; bigotted from his papal creed, and tuition of his mother; but of that easy nature, whoever won his ear turned him to their purpose.

"His brother, the Archduke Matthias, a brave and frank mannered man, (but master of a depth of policy few guessed at,) was constituted by the emperor governor of Hungary and Austria. Hence, in peace, he lived either at Presburg or Vienna; and, during war, always at his post in the field. Rodolph himself usually held his residence at Prague, the capital of his kingdom of Bohemia, passing his time in a sort of busy idleness; while his brother, the presumptive heir of his power,

was earning the wishes of the empire in many a campaign against its enemies.

"But Ferdinand of Styria, just mentioned before (and whose appanage comprised the whole of the neighbouring countries to the Venetian sea), on the plea of his near kindred, often abided with the emperor; and by certain subtleties, gradually superseded Matthias in his heart. Sometimes, indeed, he varied the ground, but to the same object; either privately promoting his views with the catholic princes of the empire; or passing in ostentatious parade, from station to station on the Croatian borders of Turkey; or crossing them in equal pomp, to share in the glories of his rival's victories; or rather, with invidious observation, to lay up store to disparage the military skill of Matthias and his young heroes; every one of whom he abhorred as a personal enemy, in exact proportion to their service in swelling the fame of

the man whose rights he hoped to circumvent, by destroying the reputation he could envy, but not emulate.

"At this time Holland, or rather the Seven United Provinces of the Low Countries, had secured their freedom from the Spanish yoke, pressed hard upon them by the cruelties of the Duke of Alva; and under the stadtholdership of their champion, the Prince of Orange, they maintained themselves as an independent state. But the southern, or Walloon provinces, were still held in the old intolerant vassalage; and by the name of the Spanish or Austrian Netherlands, (for the emperor retained some interest in them), yielded a murmuring obedience. The inhabitants were ostensibly catholics, and that they should never show sign of the reverse, a threatened inquisition held them in check. Still, however, they were the victims of both opinions; for, surrounded by the combatant disputers, their land became a sort of lists, in

which a comparative few on either behalf, brought forth those sanguinary arguments of fire and sword, which, if carried into all the countries these challengers represented, must have desolated half Europe.

"The same chivalric mode of compressing the field for victory or defeat, could not be adopted between Christendom and the infidel barbarians of the East. The recent conquest of the Greek empire, by those fiercest followers of the creed of Mahomet, inspired them with an ambition to become masters of the western empire also; and every spring saw their armies, like locusts, overspread its eastern quarter. Therefore, on the plains of Hungary, or amongst the trackless wilderness of Transylvania, or along the burnt-up and trampled vallies of Croatia, the Archduke Matthias led his adventurous Germans, to repel the savage hordes which eat up the land. After several hard fought campaigns, in which

Christian of Luneburg and Ernest of Mansfeldt were his right and left hands, he at last had the satisfaction of driving them back over their own frontier; and of forcing their Sultan to sign a peace, full of honour to his conqueror, and advantage to Christian Europe.

"France, too, about the same period, had become a theatre for noble hearts and resolute arms. But Henry of Navarre closed its bloody tournaments, for awhile, in similar glory. And when the writer of this sketch opened his master's doors, to those who gave rise to the memorial, he believed all the world was at peace."

So far the chronicler. The next page will relate where his record was found, and concerning whom it was penned.

DUKE CHRISTIAN

OF

LUNEBURG;

OR,

TRADITION FROM THE HARTZ.

CHAP. I.

AMONGST certain worm-eaten manuscripts discovered a few years ago in a small walled-up closet attached to the ruins of an old castellated hunting lodge in the forest of Hartz, may still be seen a curiously written account of a night's sojourn there, made by four mysterious travellers during one of the sudden and tremendous storms which often desolate those wild regions. A slip of parchment annexed to the manuscript commemorates the fall on the same night of a very ancient and famous pine, usually called the

Bed of the Fowler, and calculated to have stood, o'ercanopying the forest, above seven hundred years; the last, indeed, of a vast druidical grove which formerly skirted the whole of the neighbouring mountain. The chronicle and its adjunct bear date anno Domino 1610; but the events they record occurred something earlier. For the rest of the narrative, collected into these more modern pages, and by which some extraordinary circumstances in the appearances of the above-mentioned travellers are explained, it is gathered from other equally authentic sources, spared by accident probably from the hand of war, while its brand and its plunderers totally destroyed many more apparentlly lasting monuments.

The memorable storm just mentioned happened towards the middle of the month of August. The day had been insufferably hot, even to people travelling under the sheltering umbrage of the forest, and was succeeded by an evening of so dense

a gloom, that clouds dropt like curtains on the hills, till the whole horizon became enveloped in a dark twilight, lurid, portentous, and terrific. The wood-fellers abandoned their work unfinished to hasten home; the very deer fled to covert; and the multitude of various birds, which all day had been singing from the trees, became mute, and buried themselves amongst the branches. The awful stillness which followed this shrouding of the whole scene, was soon disturbed by a low murmuring, as if from the depths of the forest; when also the coal-blackness of the sky became suddenly broken by sheets of lightning, succeeded by a few large drops of rain; and long before the nearest woodman got to shelter, the clouds burst in torrents.

In the midst of this water-spout, a little troop of wayfaring cavaliers drew up their horses beneath an overhanging screen of fir-trees on the side of a precipitous dell. They had hardly taken their station, ere

the thunder began to rattle and peel over their heads, as if the very heavens were at war; and while the sable of premature night blotted out every object, in a single instant a sweep of forked fire, accompanied by a whirlwind that seemed to seize the whole forest in its grasp, shot from the clouds, and illuminating a prodigiously gigantic tree which towered on the opposite brow of the ravine, shewed it hollow-trunked and hoary, though still extending its huge time-worn arms like a canopy over all around.

"Behold the Erle King!" cried a young voice, in admiration; but in the very moment the awful zig-zag displayed it erect, and yet crowned with sylvan honours, the bolt struck it; instant darkness followed the flash, and the travellers heard the riven trunk fall with a crash that shook the ground like an earthquake. Their horses took fright at the shock, and starting from so insecure a shelter, tore along as if pursued by the furies; bearing

their riders against or over every thing that opposed them, till bruised and breathless they allowed themselves to be checked on an open space, where the trees, or rent branches, whirling in the wind, no longer impeded or struck them like missile weapons. The thunder, however, still continued to roll over their heads, and was even more terribly reverberated from the caverned earth at their feet; this part of the chase having, ages back, been delved into vast subterraneous galleries by the earliest miners of the Hartz. The rain too, now unrepelled by any screen from the trees, drenched the party to the skin; and ignorant where to turn for any sort of refuge, they gladly welcomed a second electric blaze from the streaming clouds, which not only shewed them the wide forest-heath they were upon, but the grey towers of a castellated building rising above the dun line of a sodded embankment. Greeting the sight with a shout, the travellers put their

horses again to the speed; and, driven onwards by the force of the blast, the jaded animals halted within a few paces of a low exterior dyke.

The lodge it surrounded had formerly been strongly fortified, both according to ancient and modern defence; and it still possessed a fine baronial draw-bridge over a broad and once deep water-ditch. But at the time of the chronicle the moat was dry, and overgrown with underwood, except at a few hollows in the decayed ground-work, where the collected rains meeting the earth-springs, had settled into large pools, chalybeate from the soil beneath, and evincing their character by a broad yellow stain on the rough masonry around.

In approaching the bridge, which for some years had been stationary, one of the cavaliers paused a moment, listening to the huge chains still attached to its feudal timbers, swinging and rattling in the wind. The sounds were threatening,

but no heed seemed paid to the noise by warder or watch-dog of this sequestered mountain peel; and it was not till the hoofs of strange horses echoed from the drop of the bridge, that the grizzled sentinel of the gate sprung from his kennel, and with hoarse barkings gave notice to within, that foreign feet were passing to his stronghold. A man, with a resinous billet burning in his hand, issued from a postern in the side of the gateway. The travellers hardly needed to ask for shelter; their drenched appearance, and the inclemency of the night, were sufficient appeal. Besides, it was the custom of the lodge to grant hospitality to all whom chance or choice brought to its walls; and some of this party wearing the garb of the Jagd-Junker, or privileged companions of the chase, the forester greeted them with a hunter's welcome from the bugle at his breast; then holding his flaring torch before their horses, led the way through a quadran-

gular court to the main door of the dwelling part of the building. At the broad steps, running down with water from the eves, he called men to assist his guests in alighting, and went forward himself to announce them to the forest-master.

This personage, always a man of birth, and whose title imports the command he holds, in the present case was not merely a nobleman, but one who had taken his turn in courts and camps. Disabled in his tenth campaign by a wound which stiffened the joint of his sword arm, he retired in the prime of life to a small patrimony on the edge of the Hartz; and soon after was nominated by his prince, by whose side he had been wounded, to the forest district nearest his own little borders. From that day Baron Spielberg gave up the world — at least he left it to seek him; and people say he had good reason, from the faithlessness of a woman, and the treachery of a false friend, to quarrel with his kind; yet no wanderer

of high or low degree ever passed his doors, whether of the forest lodge, or his own humbler home on its skirts, without leaving benedictions on the kindly master of both; — and the blessing of benevolence did indeed reflect itself on the life of its owner.

While sitting alone in the great hall of the lodge this same evening of the storm, sometimes looking up to the high painted windows, and listening to the raging elements howling and clamouring against the casements, Baron Spielberg felt within himself the grateful security of a man under shelter not only from them, but the more pitiless blast, which, during many former tempestuous days and nights, had desolated his heart. With serenity now there, he looked down on his book, and continued to read the warlike commentaries of Julius Cæsar till his eyes were weary; then mused on the bloody battles fought ages ago under the very shades where he was then en-

joying peaceful solitude; till gradually sinking into a sleep visited by similar dreams, he was lying entranced amidst the aboriginal defenders of Germany, when the shrill notes of Raoul's bugle, and the barking of old Wolfgang, recalled him from the visionary clangor of the Roman trumpet, to those familiar sounds of his simple sylvan life. Aware that none of his own people could be abroad that boisterous night, he started on his feet to receive whoever might need his hospitality. He then heard the trampling of horses in the court-yard; and hurrying across the room, was met by the warder of the gate coming to announce his guests. The baron, again shaking himself from his yet hovering visitants of other days, hastened forward; and, as the travellers approached from the porch into the entrance hall, welcomed them with the cordiality of a liberal heart, and the ease of a man conscious of means equally bounteous.

One of the party remained without, to examine into the state of his horse, which had fallen more than once during its affrighted career. Three accompanied their host into the interior hall, answering his warm greetings with that sort of multiplied acknowledgments which often speak more of condescension than a sense of obligation. Having entered, they immediately unfastened their riding cloaks, heavy with mud; and taking off their hats, soaked in rain, threw them carelessly on a large polished table of native pine, clawed with silver, and bright as a mirror: — round and massy as that which entertained Arthur and his peers, it stood under a rafter of stag-horns, branching and twisting over that quarter of the ceiling in the fashion of a canopy. Some of these antique insignia of the chase, the trophies of many generations, and to which one of the party cast up an eye of smiling curiosity, shone, though sombrely, with ancient gilding; while

the greater number, rough and dun, exhibited the same ungarnished front that met the hunter's knife in the moment of his prize.

The travellers drew to the fire; and while Ruthard, one of the veterans of the Hartz, was heaping fuel on the embers his master's slumbers had allowed nearly to expire, the Baron himself observed, with some interest, the peculiar appearance and demeanor of his guests. Two of the cloaks on the table, he had perceived were marked on the shoulder with the privileged badge of the chase; yet the manners of the wearers differed entirely from the jocular familiarity usual with those who entered the lodge under that revel-making sanction. The courtly elegance of these noble chasseurs was even more distinguished than their fine persons; which even the most indifferent observer, must have pronounced singularly handsome. They were both very young men; and a certain general

resemblance left little doubt in the mind of the Baron of their being brothers, though nothing could be more dissimilar than their countenances. The features of the elder were correct as if cut by the chisel of a Grecian statuary, and seemed equally fixed in one expression — cold and self-centered. While the face of the younger, a youth hardly sixteen, blooming, frank, and animated, possessed a loveliness, to which no term of mere corporeal beauty can give a name; something of angelic purity; absence from guileful thought or suspicion of others, with all that is endearing in the bright and good of human kind.

Spielberg looked on him and sighed. He remembered his own early days, and similar air of confidingness in all he met; he remembered the injuries which repaid that implicit trust! And then he smiled at himself, for anticipating any resemblance between his past fate, and the future destiny of a young heart cased in

a form so unlike his own. But could he have penetrated through the marbled exterior of the elder brother, he would have seen, that neither beauty of person, nor grace of mind, can always avert the stroke caprice would inflict, or escape a wound from a baser principle.

The person who had entered with the twain, seemed much their senior, and altogether of a less refined composition. His figure was larger; and his face dark, morose, and haughty; from under-cloud of which, a jesting glance would occasionally flash, and, sometimes a sneer of scorn, not always quite assignable to the apparent object. The hunting-frocks of his companions were perfectly plain and buttoned to the throat; but a small star sparkled on the interior vest of this personage, which the accidentally opened bosom of a very ordinary buff leather doublet once or twice betrayed. The head of a finely mounted pistol, crested with a bear's paw, occupied a place near

it. His air was proud and self-assured; and the fluency of his speech, when his humour served, fully answered that bold confidence; though he often broke off in the midst of the most interesting discourse, for his talents appeared of no mean calibre, with a real or affected contempt of its subject. Baron Spielberg noticed this, even in the first conversation after their entrance; for while the elder chasseur was standing by the fire, spreading his chilled hands to the warmth and gazing into it unheeding what was said, this person began a rapid narrative of the various dilemma into which their loss of way, and surprize by the storm, had involved them; but left it to be finished by the animated and artless descriptions of his youngest companion; who, to the irrepressible consternation of one at least, of his audience, concluded with an account of the thunderbolt which shattered the gigantic pine.

The forest-master, during the recital, felt like the patriarch of a nation listening to the fate of one of his noblest subjects; and questioning the narrator as to the spot where it stood; when the immediate reply described the peculiar magnitude and shape of the tree, which the descending blaze had in the same moment displayed and blasted, the old huntsman ejaculated a sound of dismay; and the Baron, with rather a forced smile, expressed his fear that Ruthard guessed right, and that the long famous *Bed of the Fowler* was no more!

The emotion visible in the countenances of both master and servant, while the former uttered this, redoubled the interest of the young narrator in the sublime fall of a tree, to which his admiring glance had given the name of the Erle King! and with all the aroused curiosity of his earlier boyhood, — when he used to sit at his mother's feet, hearkening greedily to her

tales; not only legends from her native Denmark, but traditionary wonders concerning this very forest, — he now enquired of the baron, what was meant by calling that magnificent pine, indeed, no more! the *Bed of the Fowler?*

"From the most ancient times a record has been preserved in the Hartz," replied his host, "of our emperor, Henry I., surnamed *the Fowler* on account of his field sports, having one day, while out on a hawking party, lost his attendants and his way in the depths of the forest. After much fruitless search for an egress, being weary and benighted, he tied his horse to that tree, then a sapling, and laid himself down at a little distance to sleep. In the morning he was awoke by the neighing of his steed, and on looking up, saw a bright massy substance lying glittering in the rays of the rising sun. The animal, who had just pawed it from the ground, was striking it with his foot. The emperor rose

to observe so strange an appearance, and then perceived that the whole of the disturbed earth around sparkled with the same. Examination proved it to be silver ore; and from that hour the mines of the Hartz were discovered, — a treasure-house for himself and his people to the latest generations.

"But besides this fortunate reputation of the tree," continued the baron, "a sort of superstition is attached to its existence; for the legend goes on to say, that *the Fowler* held a solemn feast and alms-giving under its branches once every year till the day of his death, which happened on an anniversary of the discovery. And such is the extraordinary coincidence of events, from that time till now, it has been noted to lose a bough whenever any mortal calamity threatens the family of the great lord of the Hartz."

"There be those alive to witness the fact," rejoined Ruthard, with a respectful licence. "I remember, when our

good Duke Ernest the Confessor died, an arm as big as any ordinary pine was broken off by the storm of that night. And now, what are we to expect from the uprooting of the whole tree?"

He turned pale as he spoke; and the dark-browed traveller, sportively passing his hand over the face of the younger, then fixed in grave attention on the portentous countenance of the hoary-headed forester; "In my mind," cried he, "the total overthrow of so ill-boding an oracle, rather portends an end of melancholy omens than a beginning of new! And after this night's proof, I prophecy, all true liegemen to the blood of the Fowler will be bound in loyalty to say the same."

A laugh closed this remark; while the elder chasseur, who had hitherto remained almost totally silent, with a smile lighting up his before chilling reserve, observed, "that such superstitions might be regarded as captives taken in the old con-

flict between truth and error; the last lingering footsteps of Paganism from its native woods; the slow departure of the gloomy sybils, brother," said he, "whom you so devoutly worship."

The youth, feeling rather ashamed of his awe of the prognostic, blushed at this reference to him; and gaily questioned the baron respecting the nine hundred and ninety-nine beautiful phantoms of as many Saxon virgins, reported to haunt the depths of the silver mines.

During all this, and the more general discourse which succeeded, nothing was dropped by his guests to lead their host to know who they were; though he gathered sufficient to corroborate his first impression, of their being of the highest rank. The far-stretching tracts of the Hartz bordered on several sovereign states. He knew the antler-badge of its chase had been presented by the duke his master to most of them; and the young men before him, might well

belong to any one of those princely houses. Once, indeed, a certain contour in the figure of the eldest chasseur had struck him with a resemblance to his own lord—the veteran Duke of Brunswick Luneburg, when he was at the same age; but the face was so totally dissimilar, he dismissed the idea; though with a feeling, that if such should be the quality of his guests, he was not sorry their disinclination to disclose themselves, spared him the trouble of court ceremony at his rustic board.

CHAP. II.

All this while, the thunder rolling at a distance, continued to reverberate awfully amongst the hills; and the descending floods, without abating, still poured against the deep-bayed windows, rebounding from the huge jutting stone-work, with the violence and noise of a sea struggling for admittance. At one of the most furious gusts, the great outward door being suddenly opened, a rush of wind with rain like a cataract, burst into the entrance-hall, and forcing asunder the heavy folding doors of the interior apartment, the party within heard voices in the court-yard shouting for lights, and calling loudly on the stranger to beware of the tank. The forest-master now recollected that Raoul had announced four travellers; and stung with a hospitable pang at his

own forgetfulness, without apology to his other guests for abruptly starting from his seat, he was hastening out to seek their companion, when the object of his self-reproach entered the hall.

The aspect of this stranger made the veteran pause on his step for a moment, and then advance to greet him, with that sense of the presence of a superior, which compels an instant homage not only of the manner but the mind; a homage, that elevates the person who bestows it, merit alone being its object; and none can pay it, who do not themselves deserve some portion of the tribute. Spielberg did not ask himself, "Who is this?"—Of his name he might continue ignorant; but he saw, the person who approached him was not merely what soldiers call a *man of service*, but one whom nature formed to command. His demeanour shewed the right was granted him. He, too, seemed in the spring of life; perhaps even junior to his dark-browed associate;

who, with all his evident knowledge of the world, and air of gloomy self-dependence, retained something of the greenness of unmoderated youth; while a chastened fire shone in the looks of this person, and a station appeared in his carriage, which, whatever might be his birth, spoke a noble purpose in life: the air of dignity that surrounded him was its consequence. No assumption was needed; nor were there any appearance of his thoughts being employed one way or other on the subject. He uttered his thanks for the apologies and proffered civilities of the forest-master, with the simple frankness of a man really obliged; and looking towards his friends, congratulated them, with a smile, on their comfortable quarters. He was dripping with the second deluge he had passed under from the stables.

The youngest of the party was walking about the room, with the buoyant love of movement belonging to his years; but

his brother, and his companion, had thrown themselves into high-backed elbow chairs, at the distance of the baron's table from the fire, now in full furnace. Half a dozen dogs, of various choice breeds, lay stretched amongst the rushes which strewed its ample hearth; while the burning reflections cast from two immense brazen columns flanking it, set the whole of that quarter of the hall in a seeming blaze. One of these monuments proved to be a copy from the great goal of the games on the banks of the Bosphorus; the other, terminating in a point, and hung with old armour highly burnished, owed its original to Jerusalem. The young chasseur had drawn near the latter, when Ruthard re-entered with the last guest; and the veteran's eye falling on the gazing position of the animated boy, his recent sympathy with his former story drew the old man again to his side; who was not a little pleased at being instantly asked the meaning of such extraordinary

pieces of furniture. Ruthard proudly replied, that "both columns had been brought from the east, centuries back; and placed here in honour of an ancient lord of the domain, well known for his great exploits in that famous land." This excited more questions, and more answers, till the long stories of each trophy were duly repeated, in a low voice, to the smiling and attentive listener.

Meanwhile, the dripping cavalier disencumbered himself of his wet cloak. It bore no mark of the chase; but the baron, with a cordial glow of soldierly brotherhood, perceived that his under garments were entirely military. A kind of half dress, consisting of a perfumed leather doublet; with a large steel gorget, curiously inlaid with an impresse, but in characters beyond the decyphering of his host. A scarlet embroidered scarf crossed his shoulder, while a gold chain of uncommon weight and magnificence, suspended a small iron-bound wooden

cross from his neck. His belt contained a brace of long pistols; and a ponderous sword hung at his side, so plainly mounted, there could be no doubt the value lay more in the metal than the ornament. The spurs at his heels jingled on the floor as he stepped: which novelty, had the baron been as familiar with modern as with ancient military practice, might have hinted to him the name of his guest;—the young field-marshal, who made the first use of his influence in the army, to lessen the miseries of war, not only to man but to beast! and amongst other ameliorations, he invented this sort of rowel, to stimulate without goring the generous animals he rode to the field.

As soon as he drew near his friends, they enquired about his horse. It had proved less hurt than he expected; and his humanity leading him at the same time to examine theirs, he told them the result. While the discourse continued thus more exclusively amongst them-

selves, Spielberg turned his attention to the hither end of the hall, where supper was preparing; and when duly spread with the best of his forest fare, venison, wild boar, and wines from the Rhinegau, he came forward to invite his guests to the board; addressing himself first to the cavalier, who, however, declined the seat of honour. The personage who wore the hidden star, threw himself, with a derisive smile, into a chair at the bottom of the table; while the elder chasseur, not seeming to regard where he was placed, took the vacant seat at the right hand of the baron. The younger still lingered near the historiographer of the brazen pillar; and when he answered his brother's summons to the table, that he was hearing a tale of chivalry, the dark-browed knight at its foot exclaimed, "Rather pledge to its manes! Hard blows are now more likely to soil, than improve coats of nobility."

"If so," returned the youth, "we are

more obliged to them who burnished ours. Besides," whispered he to the cavalier, as he took his seat beside him, "these old stories remind me of my dear brother far away; and he does not fear soiling his coat, in any field of modern day!"

The cavalier smiled his reply.

The forest-master, meanwhile, as his guests did honour to his board, helped them with hospitable alacrity from the smoking haunch. More exhausted by cold and long fasting than absolute fatigue, the comfortable shelter they had found, and the present good cheer, seemed to re-vigorate in spirit and body the whole party. Even the chilling reserve of the elder chasseur dissolved under the genial influence; and he joined the animated discourse of the hour, by eulogising the magnificent scenery they had been travelling through, till just before the darkening storm shut out the landscape, and bewildered himself and his companions

in the maze of rocky glens and precipitous woods.

The knight of the star did not so soon neglect his flask and trencher; but the cavalier often forgot both, while remarking on the happy aspect of the whole country between the farthest Saxon bank of the Elbe, and the borders of the Ocher, the romantic and wizard stream of the Hartz. He drew a comparison betwixt this forest district and those of Bohemia, and Austrian Germany: and well he might; for in those immense imperial wildernesses, totally abandoned to the chase, the wide silent solitude is seldom animated with sign of life, except where the deer are scared from their browse, or the wild boar from his lair, by the privileged hunters and their dogs. Then, indeed, may be heard the plaintive bleat of the one, or savage growl of the other, returned by the echoes. Sometimes, also, hordes of outlaws command the remote passes of those vast deserts; but neither

spade nor plough break the soil of their haunts, nor the voice of cheerful labour their gloomy retirement. In the Hartz, on the contrary, large tracts in fine cultivation, were seen every where, routing the desert of its barren heaths and savage animals. Farms, vineyards, and the village church, had displaced the den of the robber; and the rough-hewn wooden cross no longer marked the spot of the lonely traveller's murder.

While the conversation ran thus, the countenance of the forest-master, to whom it was principally addressed, underwent a variety of changes. Proud of the *good old cause*, to the success of which he attributed every advantage described, he did not interrupt the last speaker in a parallel that warmed his heart; but at its close, he eagerly replied, "So it is! and all the effect of a pure religion! the only sure ground of good laws and rational freedom; in short, not the pro-

fession only, of Christianity, but the practice."

The dark-browed traveller looked abruptly up from his trencher, and asked whether he meant the Roman Catholic, or the Lutheran, or what other practice? While he spoke, he directed his eye full on the iron cross at the breast of the cavalier.

The baron, in a surprise, hardly knew how to answer. He felt, that no such explanation would have been required, were the company what he had supposed them; that it could not have been put in the presence of any Prince of Brunswick; and he was at a loss what to think of the marked reference of the moody speaker, to the ever sacred, but now disputed, emblem worn by the cavalier. He who owned it, though unobserving the suspicious glance which pointed the doubt, did not lose the wondering gaze with which his young companion

was regarding the query, or rather the irreverent carelessness with which it was put; and also perceiving the instant expression which over-clouded the open countenance of their host, this true knight of the cross, with a double solicitude, on account of the impression on the ductile mind of the one, and the probable vague opinion of their principles on the other, —after a pause, as if awaiting the reply of the baron, broke the silence:—

"To me," said he, with a gentle bow to their host, "the definition is sufficiently explicit; at least I understand it in this way, —that by whatever name we call the mode of our religion, if the pure spirit of Christianity be the guide of its professors, whether princes or people, there must be reciprocal justice; which includes every freedom with which human nature can be safely trusted. The Roman Catholic faith was not always what it now is. Pure in its origin, it became obscured by the blinding purposes of evil

men, a disgrace to the priesthood, who bought and sold the human conscience. Princes and people being left, in consequence, to their own darkened passions, the one degenerated into selfish despots, the other became interested slaves. The vices of either class I need not descant on. But when the Holy Scriptures were brought from the dust of the cloister, light again broke over the mystery of human wretchedness. Men had the means to compare their conduct with the standard of God; and seeing their relative duties to Him, and to their fellow creatures, found that religion was virtue, and virtue happiness."

"Yes, noble sir," returned Spielberg; "and thus the liberal spirit of the restored faith,—for you justly explain it so—having converted the arbitrary dictation of our hereditary lords, into an equitable guardianship of their people from every species of oppression whatever; and aware that *force may maintain the right*

of individuals, but law is the defence of all! they secured our liberty of conscience by the ever memorable *Peace of Religion:* — a happy issue of the confession of the Protestant faith, made not a century ago in presence of the Emperor; and under the auspices of the brave and pious fathers of this very house!"

The baron had felt the pulses of his old heart beat as in the days of his youth while listening to, and answering the cavalier. But the elder chasseur, for some reason regretting the discussion, interrupted further response by a gratulatory remark on the swords and pikes of former days, being now transformed into plough-shares and pruning hooks; "giving peace," said he, "to man and beast!"

"*Ecce signum!*" returned the knight of the star with a shrug, glancing first at the warlike accoutrements of the cavalier, and then on the full armed walls of the apartment.—Indeed every species of sylvan

weapon were there; bows and arrows, couteaux de chasse, hunting spears, and fowling pieces, of all periods and fabrics. The most ancient were arranged in the fashion of a state armoury, in stars and other devices; while those for daily use stood nearer hand, in the ready rank and file of well-prepared arms. Antlers, stag-heads, and other spoils of the chase, filled up the interstices; and here and there large pannelled pictures to the same effect, in heavy carved frames of black oak, occupied the broader spaces in the dusky wainscoat; which, however, stretched only half-way up the massive stone-work of the wall, relinquished for ages, in that higher region, to the display of elk sculls, rein-deer horns, and other forest trophies from distant lands, branching to the utmost cove of the groined roof, where cobwebs knit them together.

"I never could have conceived this old lodge so formidable a den!" resumed the elder chasseur, following the roll of

his companion's eyes with his own, and rising with him.

"Very probably," remarked the baron, "it belongs to the race of the lion; and something more than a tincture of his blood may be required to relish his tracks."

There was a turn in the veteran's countenance when he uttered this, that brought a flush over the cheek of the last speaker; and collecting his former restrained air, he might have sunk again into cold silence, had not his dark-browed coadjutor, now mounted into his very alt of scorn, pointed to a gigantic figure in bas relief at the opposite side of the hall, and sarcastically asked, whether that were not his shaggy majesty's portrait? It was the effigy of an armed man, and carved in cedar wood. The face, in broad front, wore a huge mass resembling a wig or helmet, surmounted by a sort of diadem; whence some towering crest, now broken off, formerly emerged. A

full curling beard, parted on the breast, might very excusably have been taken for a lion's mane; while the royal owner proved his manhood, by holding a sword in one hand, and a Saracen's head in the other. The further history of the image, which Spielberg indeed regarded as one of his household gods, might possibly have been elucidated by the complete insignia of asiatic warfare, and armorial 'scutcheons cut in the rugged sculpture of the frame; but the questioner not seeming inclined to take that trouble, turned to their host for a reply. The baron, offended with the growing derision of one at least, rather sternly made answer:—

"That is Richard of England! a prince, indeed, of the same temper. But Henry, the lion of Brunswick, of the blood and spirit of *the Fowler*, he stands yonder at the hither end of the hall. His foot is on the neck of idolatry, Krodo, the great idol of the Baltic shores; whose altar, brought to this place, in memory

of the victory gave its name to the adjacent mountain. The right hand of the chief rests on the model of a Christian church, which he built as a still nobler monument; a beautiful female captive kneels at his feet; and his left hand holds the sceptre of half Germany."

"Till a stronger arm took it!" muttered the knight to himself, while he and his companion mechanically proceeded with Spielberg towards the object of his narration. "This fair captive was a princess of the conquered Sclavi, and the victor bestowed her in marriage on a helmed knight in his rear," continued the baron.

This story was begun within hearing of the youngest of the party; who, on the rest leaving the table, had engaged in assisting the cavalier to dry some papers he found soaked through in the pouche of his vest; but the youth no sooner caught the words of the baron in passing the hearth, than he was drawn also

amongst his audience. The dark-browed commentator was then amusing himself with whimsical remarks, uttered in his usual morose tone, on the grotesque design and ruder workmanship of the whole piece; the elder chasseur having indeed mistaken the most prominent feature of the kneeling beauty, for some spiked appendage to the elbow of her mailed lover. But soon as the sarcastic knight found his younger companion at his side, he turned abruptly to him, and demanded — "whether he really thought those grim personages, were in fact truer heroes, than his old friend of the nursery, the giant-killer? Both history and fairy tales, in his mind, had their magnifying glass."

"Baron! You will answer him?" — was the reply. — The forest-master turned on the speakers; and the ingenuous face of the latter, looking on him in the confidence of a kindly response, disarmed him of the displeasure he was fast accumulating against some of the com-

pany. The elder chasseur too, as if solicitous to make some amends for his share in a seeming ingratitude to their host's politeness, observed — that "those worthies had been buried so long, it ought not to surprise him, when he found persons, not particularly interested in their memories, had either forgotten, or knew very little about them: — And something of this being our case," added he, "I would thank Baron Spielberg to indulge my brother with the legend?"

"Young men," returned the veteran, "whoever ye may be, and however rude these effigies are, they represent persons whose claims to your reverence, rest on veritable history, not on vague legends.— They are, indeed, the poor memorials of two of the noblest works of God; and their example belongs to all mankind: a great prince, the champion of the church, and the father of his people! and a no less renowned hero, also a sovereign, who carried the banner of Christ to the most

distant infidel shores. — Richard Cœur de Lion of England, and our lion-hearted Henry, were near kinsmen; — in fact, their united blood fills the brave veins of my master, and his gallant sons!"

While the baron was speaking with the rapidity of enthusiastic recollections, the youngest of his auditors found a hand on his shoulder, and looking round, saw it to be the cavalier's; who, at the repetition of the names of the two heroes, had risen from his seat, and came forward — "George," said he, in an under tone, "this is the sound of the trumpet!"

The youth answered with a bright glance, while their host proceeded in the same excited strain, to recount the descent of Henry of Brunswick from a race of ancestors, whose brave lineage had mingled in the depths of time with that of Arminius. Lords, indeed, of a vast wooded region from the Danube to the ocean, and by a right ancient as their bulwarks; in these very forests they had

made Varus and his legions pay the forfeit of their lives, for having attempted to put Roman chains on German necks."

"Yes! and no true descendants of their blood can listen to the spirit in these woods," exclaimed the cavalier, "and ever suffer a modern Cæsar to repeat the yoke of Rome, either upon their civil liberties or conscience."

The baron's honest countenance expanded at this remark; and directing his discourse especially to his youngest listener, he proceeded to say — that "on this very principle, the chiefs of that family had always acted; whether, like Henry the Fowler, they were themselves elected to the imperial throne; or, like Henry the Lion, with the less ostentatious title of duke, ruled over an extent of country more than dividing power with the empire itself. From the Elbe to the Rhine, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, his sway was acknowledged; and his alliance sought by the

greatest potentates of Europe; but the attraction of similar virtues directing him to England, he there took to wife the sister of the lion-hearted Richard.

"Like that right-worthy sharer of so magnanimous a title," continued the narrator, "our valiant Henry became a knight of the cross; rescuing the new proselytes of Christianity on the shores of the Baltic, from the exterminating pagan rites bequeathed to their oppressors, by their early conquerors from old Rome:—and thus he established an empire from sea to sea, even more in the hearts than the territories of his subjects."

George felt, as the Baron proceeded, there was more real chivalry in one page of these "veritable histories," than in all the romances he had ever read, from Amadis de Gaul to the brave Princes of Arcady. He listened with avidity to how the German hero trod in the English king's steps to the Holy Land; defending the weak, and succouring the afflict-

ed. How he endowed the charitable hospitalities of the Knights Templars, with rich offerings from his own abundant mines in the Hartz; and how, having performed some signal service to Manual the Greek emperor, he rejected the finest jewels of the imperial crown, and accepted the brazen pillar of the hall, in memory of the exploit.

"But it was not by crusades nor conquests," continued Spielberg, "that Henry the Lion acquired his best fame. He transformed naked wastes into fertile fields. Villages he expanded to towns; and where a barren beach exposed a few fishing huts to the unchecked violence of a turbulent sea, he established the great maritime emporium of Lubeck. Munich, the capital of Bavaria, owed its origin to him; and he reared the now magnificent city of Luneburg from the ground. Thus, by the true policy of maintaining his power, by the welfare of his people; protecting the rights he found or be-

stowed, by his laws and his arms; the integrity of his dominions remained for many years an example to posterity. But evil days tried the fortitude of this great prince. The Emperor became jealous of his power, and the neighbour-bouring princes envied it. One volunteered to strike the first blow —"

"Aye," interrupted the dark-browed traveller, with a smile of bitterness, "your Leo was not always to have the ascendant! — The bright Bear rose! — and has set — but, in the wheel of time, it may rise again!"

Spielberg observed the speaker's hand, as if by an irresistible impulse, press the half-concealed crested bear-paw on his pistol's head, to his breast as he spoke; and then he could not but suspect that he saw in him, one who felt affinity with the first enemy of his master's house.

"If your astrology be portentous," continued the baron, "it is to be hoped the race of the bear, is more worthy to

supplant the lion than their progenitor! The usurpation he then made of another's rights, gave the lesson which taught other princes, to usurp those of his posterity."

The traveller did not reply; and Spielberg continued his discourse, by remarking, that when adversity assailed Henry the Lion, it did not wait long before it attacked his royal namesake also. "Both," added he, "passed the ordeal, like gold through the furnace, proving the true metal, and rivetting their friendship the stronger. When persecuted by the tyrant of the empire, and over-reached by the cunning and ambitious springs of Bernhard of Brandenburg, not unaptly surnamed the Bear, Henry received means of defence from his brother of England; and when Richard was made prisoner by the treachery of Austria, the two sons of Henry of Brunswick gave themselves hostages for his ransom! That rude piece of chisel-

ling," observed the narrator, pointing to a figure carved in the huge frame-work of the colossal group, "represents Otho, the eldest of the brothers. He is there in imperial robes, having been afterwards emperor. The effigy on the left, armed cap-a-pee, is William the other son; surnamed *Fair Sword*, from the purity of his honour; and *of Winchester*, from having been born in that English city, when his illustrious parents were the guests of Cœur de Lion. William espoused a Princess of Norway. We have still old tales of his valour and her beauty, which erected them into the idols of Germany; and from them, in a direct line, springs my gallant master, William Duke of Brunswick Luneburg!"

"My father!" exclaimed the youngest of his auditors; whose luminously agitated countenance, like summer lightning, for some time had been giving notice to the observing eye of the

cavalier of this explosion; and unable any longer to control the proud delight with which he found himself descended from two such heroes, in the burst of his feelings he grasped the hand of the brave narrator with a fervour that could not be mistaken. The good old soldier's heart swelled too big for utterance, and bowing his grey locks upon the youthful glowing hand that clasped his, he kissed it ardently — then, for a few moments, walked away.

There was a general pause, till the frowning advocate of *the Bear* broke it, by a whisper to the elder chasseur; who immediately turned with a severe reproof to his brother, on so unnecessary a disclosure of themselves.

"Forgive me, Ernest?" replied he, wiping away the tear that sparkled in his eye from a sort of emotion he had never felt before; "but had my life been the forfeit of that exclamation, I could not have helped it."

The cavalier, without attending to the displeasure of the elder prince, suddenly pressed the younger in his arms. He did not say any thing; but the warm throb George met there, confirmed the newly-kindled flame in his soul, never to be extinguished.

When the baron rejoined them, his veteran face was all smiles, while the dew of a deeper sensibility glistened in the furrows of his cheeks. He owned, that more than once during the evening a suspicion had crossed him, that one at least of his master's sons then honoured the old lodge with his presence. "It was not my business to invade the concealment I found," said he; "but it is every man's duty to speak worthily of his benefactors, whether dead or living; and occasion, once or twice, seeming to demand it of me this evening, (and his eye glanced on his sarcastic guest,) I bore the witness I must ever testify of the truly illustrious parentage, *sans peur*,

sans reproche, whence you derive your being!" With the last words, his heart, and his venerable head, bowed to the cavalier.

A scarlet suffusion passed over the whole of that noble countenance; a cloud also for a moment darkened his brow; but it fled before the sudden fire of his eyes, when he replied — and in a tone his peculiar characteristic, mild, manly, sweet, but unanswerably decisive; "Baron! in me you are mistaken. I am a soldier of fortune. These are the sons of your Duke!" and he looked on the two brothers.

Spielberg continued to steadily regard him. — He had not even then named himself; but the veteran again felt there was no need of any announcement, to assure him he was then in the company of some one of those celebrated captains, who, uniting the impetuous heroism of youth with the sagacious observation of experience, had lately made tyranny tremble

from the south to the east; — and repeating the bend of his hoary hairs, with redoubled respect to the young and modest chief before him, made answer: —

"I do not apologize to either party," said he, "for mistaking that port, and the principles connected with it, for those of my master's second son, Christian of Brunswick! For, since his valour has assisted Henry of Navarre, in giving security to the Hugonots of France, I deemed it not improbable he might now be passing this way, to sheath his disinterested sword in the hall of his fathers."

"We must not talk of a disinterested sword here!" replied the cavalier; "the extended cause, of which the Hugonots are only a part, is the interest of every man. Hence, wherever a true arm is yet to be stretched in its defence, there we must seek Christian of Brunswick. Here, indeed, is peace, but much remains for the peace of Christendom."

CHAP. III.

THE youthful hero, whom these, his aged and young compatriots, united to eulogize, was, as the baron observed, the second son of William, Duke of Celle and Luneburg; the then most revered branch of the widely spreading stem of Brunswick. The family of Celle acquired this pre-eminence, not only on account of its more extensive territory, and the consummate leaders it had produced to the defence of Germany, but it was renowned all over Europe in memory of its chief Ernest the Confessor, having been the first duke whose state embraced the doctrines of Luther, and afterwards maintained their scriptural authority against the whole bigotry and persecutions of the papal arm. From that time, whenever circumstances made the demand, the

same spirit shewed itself in one or other of his race; but now it was with Prince Christian that it seemed to abide in fullest measure.

During most of these remarks, Ernest, who was this early hero's eldest brother, remained silent; while the soul of George, still all ear, told from his eyes its commentary.

Their dark-browed companion, with some asperity, observed, that "Prince Christian's foreign fame, was more likely to injure than promote the pure Protestant cause, in a German field; jealousy being natural, with grave spirits, against religious argument, or military steadiness, learnt in a French camp!"

"Envy, alone, will ever dictate such a sentiment!" answered the baron, warmly.

"And no man who really knows him, can envy the reputation of Christian of Brunswick from any feeling of jealousy," rejoined the cavalier. "His religious

principles are proved by his practice; his military steadiness, by the purpose of his life; and, for his personal qualities, they stand in no man's way, but rather assist the rising of all who dare the same track. Pardon something of egotism, in what I am going to say. But being what I told you, baron, — a soldier of fortune, — my happy fortune has put it in my power to bear a conclusive testimony to this part of our subject."

The knight of the Bear's-paw, whose doubting shrug, besides his former observation, had extorted this from the cavalier, exclaimed, "I know I am a stiff infidel against whatever would vaunt human consistency beyond what I have experienced. — I am honest in declaring, I think Christian of Brunswick a man — and therefore to be looked to. — You will pardon me, princes!" continued he, to the brothers, "sincerity is my castle."

"Your den!" answered the eldest, with a smile.

"Aye, my den!" replied the haughty descendant of Bernhard; and not displeased at the implied reference to his once powerful ancestor, he added, "and having vented my growl, proceed you with your proofs!"

The cavalier, like all who knew him, privileged this moody man, and smiling his assent to the seeming command, turned to the baron, and resumed—

"When Prince Christian, then a mere youth, first appeared in the plains of Hungary against the Turks, I, too, a stripling, bore arms in the same field.—We were not personally acquainted; but he afterwards generously remarked, when a prince's suffrage might be a ladder for a subaltern step—that he had then observed my spurs were no colder than his own.—But at that time, neither of us had found opportunity of distinguishing

ourselves beyond the common tracks of duty.

"One day, however, the leading of a forlorn-hope of great importance was to be appointed. My heart took fire, perhaps, with something more than ambition. The tent of our commander was crowded with young men likely to be chosen; my eagerness precipitated me before the rest, and I volunteered the service. Another stepped forward at the moment, but the agitation I was in prevented me discerning who it was, or even distinguishing the voice that made the same petition.

"I cannot comply with both," returned the general; "but you, Prince Christian, by birth and merit may claim this terrible expedition,—if you really demand it. For terrible, I must warn you, it will be; to wrest a post from the enemy, he knows commands the key of the campaign!—Death, or the atchievement! There is no medium, prince.—

I would give the bravest veteran in our army an hour to consider of it."

"The tumult in my breast, during this address, engaged me too much to think of leaving the spot, which I ought to have done immediately. But the instant our commander ceased speaking, Christian, whose more composed spirits had been observing my emotion, with all the generous impulse of which, perhaps, only he is fully capable, respectfully answered, "General, I dare not accept your preference. That young man volunteered before me; and I should, indeed, fear to perish, did I rob him of his just precedence.'

"A vague murmur ran through the tent. Christian had not then found more opportunities for signalizing himself, than any of the commonest rank there present; therefore, the risk was something to his reputation, in thus seeming to recede from an eminently perilous undertaking. But opinion knew him too well, to doubt

his courage. It was the honour he relinquished. And to one who—in short, he resigned to a nameless volunteer, this brilliant occasion of distinguishing himself before the eyes of the first captains in Europe. I was successful——"

The cavalier paused for a moment, to subdue the beating of his heart, which, on these remembrances, began to unsteady his voice. That tranquillized, he added, in a calmed but not less impressive tone, "The honours I then acquired I felt hardly my own. I seemed to have rifled them from Christian, and they sat even gallingly upon me, till the Almighty brought me to his rescue in the field of Raab. It was then life for honour. I recovered him from the enemy, at the expence of being disabled half the rest of the campaign; and, ever since, separated or near, we have had but one heart."

While the cavalier was speaking, George did not, as before, sit drinking in

every word that fell, with his newly awakened soul seen in his eloquent countenance. He leaned his head upon the table, listening indeed, and full of thickly coming thoughts. The remarks of the brave Spielberg, on this comprehensive trait in the character of his master's son, may well be guessed; but he would have been glad to have gathered also, from the narrative, who he was whose frank disclosure shewed how well he merited the sacrifice. During the recital, his black-browed companion sat with a seeming morose indifference, though, now and then, a glance from under his pent lids, sufficiently evinced he felt something else than satisfaction in the subject.

The mention of Raab drew on some general remarks from the baron, on the singularly desperate character of that campaign; in the midst of which discourse, the warning bell for evening prayer rang from the great tower of the lodge, sounding, amongst the yet sweep-

ing gusts of the subsiding storm, with dull and heavy clangour. All present were aware of its import; those exercises of piety being regular, even in the wildest abodes of men, wherever the reformed religion was professed: but the usual minister for such ordinances not having appeared, Prince Ernest enquired who would perform the service, and was answered, the pastor Orpitz; a venerable Lutheran refugee from the old persecutions on the Rhine, who having lost two sons, and nearly his own life also, in those awful times, had found an asylum in this remote region, passing his years in almost monastic seclusion.

"His eyes were injured by a pistol shot, in the tumult where his sons perished," continued the baron; "and now become totally blind, he seldom leaves his apartment but to perform the duties of religion."

A narrow arched door, near the effigy of Cœur de Lion, was opened by Ruth-

ard, who brought lights for the chambers, and set them on the table, to be ready when service should be over. The moody personage of the party took up one, and with a sullen bow to his host, remarked, that as Calvin and Luther had some points to settle with each other, as well as with the Pope, he must be excused in retiring to his own vespers. With the word, he passed beyond the high carved Gothic screen, which protected the fireside quarter of the hall from the side of entrance; and as he disappeared, the baron, with a question in his eyes, looked on Prince Ernest.

"I see your surprize," returned he, "but our companion professes the faith of Geneva; and, though thus shewing more prejudice, perhaps, than knowledge of his subject, he is nevertheless a warm advocate in the Imperial presence, for Protestant liberty of conscience; hence, we may excuse his intolerance here!"

"Pardon, but not excuse," returned

Spielberg. "Schism amongst friends, is the worst species of enemy; opening gaps, not merely to produce disunion, but for argument to attack our principle."

"Baron," observed the cavalier, "with regard to earthly policy, doubtless our schisms in the church, may be destructive, because of the political disunions they produce; but they strengthen our faith in the foundation on which the church is sustained, because they prove its solidity. The jealousy of sectarianism prevents all interpolations in the sacred books; sifts every doctrine; so that any device brought forward by fanaticism, ignorance, or evil design, is canvassed, and held parallel with the Scriptures. By this means, though Luther and Calvin may dispute, still the doctrine of Christianity is not the less found to be One, and unchangeably free from all taint of human contrivance. The hottest opponents in opinion, are in fact the most vigilant guardians over the

purity of that divine testament, from which all date their common salvation. Yet, though Providence thus turns mortal infirmity to good account, I am far from deeming it a reason for unduly encouraging the propensity to cavil and dissent. Men's own fair judgments, or pride in dictating to others, are sufficient impulses of themselves. But it is a subject of wonder, and to adore with admiration, how the Almighty wisdom transforms every apparently contrary circumstance in nature, to man's ultimate advantage—and, if he does his part, to his eternal happiness."

"I believe you are right," returned Spielberg, with an honest conviction in the smile of his countenance; "therefore I shall curb my own intolerance against your Calvin friend, and proceed in peace to our orisons!"

Ruthard announced the pastor being in the chapel—a step was heard at the moment, moving as if on tip-toe behind

the screen; the cavalier looked towards it, and thought he saw the shadow of their moody companion on the opposite wall; but concluding he must be mistaken, since he had so long withdrawn, he made no remark, and turning to the summons, followed his host and the rest of the party through the little arched door, and along a low vaulted passage, into the chapel.

This place of simple worship contained no more costly furniture than a small cushioned desk, at which the aged minister stood; his closed and sightless eyes shaded by grey hairs, while his serene countenance bore the marks of that holy light, whose beams shine inward. Benches were placed around, before which the rough sons of the forest were standing. The princes bowed to the minister when they entered, as if his rayless vision could discern their homage; but he was alike unconscious and unwishing of any homage being paid in that place to other than

his God. At the sound of the advancing steps of the baron and his guests, and particularly on hearing the mailed foot of the cavalier, for his boots were heeled with iron, the reverend man turned his head towards the part of the room where they were settling themselves, and for a few seconds he appeared to look straight forward to the spot where the cavalier stood. He then knelt down. All present did the same; and a moment of solemn stillness succeeded, while every soul was uttering its own inward preparatory prayer to the Almighty Father of them all.

The minister then began his meek yet earnest petition; and the scene, meanwhile, presented a sight that might well be called *the peace of religion;* sublime in its simplicity, to see how strength and youth, and worldly distinction, then humbled themselves at once before feeble old age, invoking the God of mercy for the only vital distinction, the purification of

their souls. On the same consecrated pavement knelt the hardy foresters with their master; opposite to them, the brother princes, with the cavalier by their side. At the end of the prayer, the benediction was given; and all rose with an orderly reverence which precluded noise, but the cavalier's metal scabbard rang against the stone floor in regaining his erect position. Orpitz again turned his face in that direction. His countenance was lifted up; and raising his hands, as if some additional invocation were yet to be offered, every one stood still. In a low, half-breathed voice, he was then heard to say,—"O God! keep the foot of war from this land! or save it from the blood of peaceful innocence!"

"Amen," echoed the cavalier, in a response from the heart, which he thought none heard but the Being to whom he addressed it,—but the quick ear of the blind, had caught the word; and motion-

ing to draw near the devout respondent, the cavalier, perceiving his intention, hastened to meet him. — The old man stopped, and with a receding movement, exclaimed—" Nearly twenty years have passed since I heard steps like those !"

George started forward, for the agitated speaker seemed ready to fall to the ground; and touching the pale emaciated hand, " Allow me, reverent sir," said he, " to lead you ?"

Orpitz trembled still more.—" Where am I ?" cried he. " That should be the voice of William of Celle ! I heard it in the dreadful hour when he led me from sights of horror !"— The venerable man gasped for breath, but held by the prince, as if grasping one who was to save him from some present evil.

" It is the voice of his son," returned George, with emotion. Before this reply was uttered, the baron had given a glance to his retainers to withdraw; a signal which the most rugged of them obeyed

with a tear in his eye; for all knew the trial of faith which had fallen upon their venerable pastor.

"And do I live to touch a son of his," ejaculated the old man, with a convulsive sob; "he who rescued mine from the burning stake, and carried me, blinded and insensible, from him I had beheld murdered!—Never shall these eyes look on human face in mercy or in wrath again; but to touch — to bless his son!—" Overcome by his recollections, the almost fainting speaker leaned against the breast of the young prince.

Meanwhile the cavalier, who had observed the painful associations connected with the sounds of his military apparel, fearing to stir, stood in mute compassion; and Ernest, whispering a rapid question to the baron, of what this unexpected reference to their father meant, received an answer in the same under tone,—that the duke had rescued the venerable man from a horrid death, and a yet more hor-

rible spectacle, in the tumult where he lost his eyes; "but I will tell you more," added he, "when the saintly victim is out of hearing."

Ernest then approaching Orpitz, George put one of his brother's hands into the old man's; "This," said he, in a voice tremulous with rising tears, "this is my eldest brother. He also, would emulate my father in paying reverence here."

The meek sufferer pressed the hand of the elder prince. — "Baron," said he, "I heard the question just put to you. These noble young men do not know all I owe to their father. You will repeat it to them when I am gone to my room; for you were present at it all! Princes!" continued he, after a momentary pause of great agitation, "my prayers are answered, to kneel beside his race, and bless them ere I die. —Yonder, doubtless, is your brave brother, whose arms have already inherited his father's anointed

purpose—to keep the sword and the brand from again desolating our persecuted altars! — Lead me to him, that I may breathe one prayer over ye all!" — While speaking, he seemed strengthened by the energy of his gratitude; and directing the sustaining hands of the princes, approached the cavalier.

"I am not Christian of Brunswick;" cried he, dropping on his knee; "but bless his cause, venerable servant of our divine master! — the cause of justice and mercy! and in that prayer every son and fellow-creature of your earthly benefactor, will receive a benediction!"

"Yes! He was my benefactor!" cried the old man, raising his sightless eyes to heaven; "a ministering angel from the All-merciful! — One child lay a bleeding corse before my eyes; but he preserved my last martyr to breathe out his blameless spirit upon his father's breast; and mine then felt a foretaste of my murdered children's eternal reparation. — Yes, I

will bless him! — His cause will bless itself! and O! may the succour he gave to me and mine, in that moment of extremity, be repaid to his children's children! May they ever be a bulwark to the weak and a refuge to the friendless; till the temporal glories of their race be exchanged for the eternal glories of the *just made perfect!*" When he uttered this, both princes kissed with reverence the devout hands which rested on their heads.

"Warrior!" added he, turning to the cavalier, "by your words you are a soldier of the truth! May the answer to the centurion be on your petitions!"

The cavalier put the pale hand to his lips which George had respectfully relinquished; and Orpitz taking the arm of the baron with the other, while a saintly composure again settled over every feature, walked with a steady though slow step towards the door; Spielberg resigned him there to his usual attendant.—Si-

lence remained with the guests till their host rejoined them; and even then they followed him in the same awe-struck mood, back into the hall; where Ernest, throwing himself into a chair, sat looking down, in deep meditation. —The cavalier broke the stillness, by enquiring in what part of Germany the horrible event had taken place.

CHAP. IV.

"On the banks of the Rhine," replied the baron; "but alas! you must regard it as only one of a sad series inflicted on our cause, at that calamitous period of harsh intolerance; a period which laid Germany in blood for nearly thirty years. —This circumstance occurred in the midst of it."

He then proceeded to relate, that the elder son of the venerable object of their compassion, having early been called to the ministry, became pastor of the Lutheran church of Cologne. At that time Gerard de Truchses, Count of Waldburg, was elector of that papal ecclesiastical state. — Being a young and high-spirited man, this exchange from a cloister to the world, with all its pleasures at command, could not but lay his heart

open to the dangers of the affections also; dangers to him, because the vows of his sacerdotal dignity would not allow him domestic relations. — Temptation soon presented itself in the person of the young and lovely Agnes of Eisleben, who came for a short time to Cologne with the countess her mother. This celebrated beauty, for all Germany rung of her charms, was first seen by the Count de Waldburg in her dress of canoness of the abbey of Gernsheim; a simple habit, which left the power of her transcendant beauty so entirely to itself, that Gerard no sooner beheld her than he became enamoured. — Circumstances detained the Countess of Eisleben at Cologne, and the young canoness, her daughter, was not long insensible to the ardour of the elector's attachment. — Still she knew, that while he continued a Catholic, neither as a prince, nor a priest, could he unite himself with her; but she a Protestant, though possessing an eccle-

siastical title, as it belonged to a secularized abbey, had no monastic vow to militate against her affections. — Gerard, who for some time had felt the unreasonable yoke of his own ordinances, and yet abhorring the absurd doctrine of indulgences, which pretended to compromise the load; even before her arrival, had become half a convert to the Lutheran opinions; and the state of his heart after her appearance, made him wholly so. — He renounced the papal faith, and led the beautiful Agnes to the altar.

The clerical son of Orpitz, being absent from Cologne at the time, the marriage was solemnized privately in the Lutheran chapel there, by a clergyman in the elector's confidence. These extraordinary nuptials were no sooner known, than the Catholic chapter of the bishoprick sent a deputation to demand of their metropolitan his immediate resignation of the see. — Such resignation would include that of the electorate; but

love had not extinguished ambition; and once in possession of a station, which he now intended should strengthen the Protestant cause, he persisted in retaining the power to which he had been elected. An appeal was made to the Emperor, and to Rome; and the pope issued a sentence of excommunication and deposition against the elector, confirmed by the imperial bann. Then burst out the storm of political contest for the sequestrated electorate; and all the more furious elements of fanatical zeal. — Waldburg and his bride were obliged to abandon his palace in the dead of night. He then wandered from place to place; for the jealousies of certain princes, with whom he hoped to have found even a short refuge, repelled him with such indignities, that, driven to despair, he determined to quit his country. — The unhappy pair had one daughter, their only offspring; and she they left in the land of her ancestors,

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somewhere under a feigned name; while they fled, no one knew whither.

Meanwhile, the most inveterate of the papal states of Germany, and some Jesuits from Rome, besetting the Emperor, he was persuaded to issue edicts of the most oppressive tendency against the Protestants in general; shutting up their places of worship, and punishing their ministers, if found any where in the public or private performance of their religious offices. The severity of the magistrates, in executing these commands, kindled an accessory zeal in the lawless populace of the several towns; and particularly at Hildesheim, where the venerable Orpitz had long exercised in unobtrusive piety the holy offices of the restored faith. — Report accused his son Rupert, the pastor of Cologne, of not only solemnising the sacrilegious nuptials of its elector, but having assisted in his total apostacy from the church.

The same sort of rumour circulated through the city of Hildesheim, that Rupert had fled from the vengeance of the electorate to the protection of its walls; and in consequence, without any previous enquiry, or demand for his surrender, a party of fanatics, with fire arms and burning brands, burst into the Lutheran church, where he was administering the sacrament with his father. The congregation rose in defence of their ministers. Orpitz's youngest son, a youth hardly eighteen, threw himself between his parent and the sabres of two imperial soldiers; others pressed on, and a merciless conflict ensued, rendered still more appalling by the terrific yells of the gathering crowds, who surrounded the building, and set fire to it in several places.

"I have witnessed many dreadful sights," observed the baron, "but never one more shocking to human nature.—It was all massacre; none within having any arms, but those they wrenched from

their enemies, to oppose to the sanguinary influx. I dare not enumerate the cruelties I there beheld wreaked upon sacred age and dauntless filial piety. — Both sons made their breasts the shield of their father; who, at the commencement, had attracted all the vengeance on himself, in attempting to protect his first-born. — But in the midst of these horrors, and I may say it in the old man's words, heaven sent a ministering angel, in the shape of your father, to check the monstrous carnage. — He, and another brave nobleman, with myself, and a few light-armed followers, happened to be passing through the town at that juncture. — There was no time for appeal to the civil authorities for justice or mercy. — We heard the outcry only a short minute before a turn in the road brought us in sight of the tumult. — Whatever might be its object, distress and bloodshed were there; and rallying each other with a word, we galloped forward, and soon distinguished

the principal victim by his white surplice, rent and stained with blood. The mob were dragging him to a stake, after having murdered one of his sons before his eyes, and bound the other, covered as he was with wounds in his father's defence, to the faggots, piled together for the old man's martyrdom.

"Our noble coadjutor, who was a Catholic, in vain held up an *Agnus Dei* he took from his breast, and called on the populace, by his own faith and theirs, to desist. They were deaf, or even more enraged. — 'Then we must fight for mercy!' cried he; and leading on one part of our little troop, while the Duke of Celle charged with the other, the rescue of both father and son was accomplished. — The wounds of the latter proved mortal; but he lived to be taken by our brave friend to the cell of a good monk on the confines of the forest between this and Hildesheim. — There, in the course of the night, the young man

died in the arms of his father; and on that spot, though a martyr for the Lutheran faith, and a minister of it also, the Catholic recluse did not deny him burial."

"Aye!" exclaimed the cavalier "if such were always the charity of both creeds, who would not say—Whatever be the difference in certain opinions, the essential is the same!"

None could withhold an affirmative to this remark; and the Baron added, that "according to the commands of the Duke of Celle, the bereaved parent, in almost an expiring state, was brought to the more comfortable refuge of this lodge; and which, indeed, from that hour, became his unmolested home. But the tears he shed in the early season of his grief, totally extinguished the faint remains of sight left by the wanton violence of the soldiers."

This sad detail sent one at least of his auditors "weeping to his bed." George, after it was finished, hurried to the farther end of the hall, to compose his emo-

tions; but finding the attempt ineffectual, he slid away, unperceived, to seek his chamber. While reading descriptions of calamity, whether in feigned or real history, distance of time or place seemed to raise a sort of dimming veil before the recorded event; — showing, indeed, just enough of its substance, to create a pleasure in the consciousness of unselfishly feeling interested in human trials; which most strangely counterbalanced the pains of sympathy. But when suffering and sorrow appeared in actual presence before the young heart of the prince, then the pang of unavailing pity came without a medium; and he felt the proof within him, that all mankind partake the same nature, having a responsive chord in every breast, from Cæsar to the slave.

Ernest, not quite so absorbed in the grief of the tale as his more finely constituted brother, when the baron paused, suddenly asked — "who the Catholic nobleman could be, who had ventured so

extraordinary an exploit, as to raise his arm against men of his own church, in defence of a Lutheran preacher?"

"Not extraordinary in him who did it;" returned Spielberg; "the brave Count Mansfeldt of Huldregan! Young men, perhaps, may better know him by the name of his son, whom the French leaguers, envying while they praise, style *le fameux batârd de Mansfeldt!*"

Prince Ernest started, and the baron added — "A stigma, however, from his mother's blood he has fairly washed away in the honours of his own. An old soldier, from Bohemia, told me, the Emperor calls him the Ulysses of his camp."

"Rather the Ulysses of Germany!" replied the prince.

"A heathen name at best!" interrupted the cavalier; "and one, if a true Christian knight, he may be as glad to expunge in some new baptism, as to wash

away the stain of his father's! The mother of Ernest of Mansfeldt," continued he, turning to the baron, "was an unfortunate Greek captive; therefore, that she became a mother without the rite of wedlock, was the stigma of him who, finding her beautiful, and in his power, forgot that last imperative claim of protection from himself! — She was blameless." He spoke with sternness, and rose from his seat.

The baron, struck by the generous indignation of this young Scipio, did not immediately answer; but Ernest, with an evidently forced smile, remarked, that the name of Mansfeldt repelled all obloquy; and a victor's acknowledged licence in the fortune of war, might well excuse transgression in such a case.

"The lawless ignorance of a common soldier might accept of such an excuse," returned the cavalier; "but in his commander it would be inadmissible. — Privilege these things, and the issue of

the justest war becomes outrage and disgrace."

There was a loftiness of reproof in his countenance, when he turned his penetrating eye upon his friend, that called a flush over Ernest's cheek; and Spielberg, too much respecting the principle from which the cavalier spoke, to agitate the subject further, silently obeyed the movement of the prince, and led the way to the sleeping apartments.

Ernest shook hands with his host at the door of the chambers prepared for him and his brother, and to which George had already retired. — The cavalier, meanwhile, was conducted to his room by the hoary-headed Ruthard, now the usual chamberlain of the lodge. — Setting his lamp down upon the table, he lingered a moment; and gazing with many ancient recollections on the sabred belt and pistols this martial guest was loosing from his side, the old man raised his hand to his grey locks with the military obeisance of

his own prime of youth; and enquired "whether his honour had any further commands?"

"None, but my thanks," returned the cavalier, observing the direction of his eye. — "These are in order, notwithstanding the accidents of the night; but their wearer is not the less obliged to the care of an old brother soldier."

These gracious words, recognising a kindred with all who honourably bore arms, (a sentiment, more firmly than oaths, binding men to their commanders!) went direct to the heart of the forest veteran; and with a tear of conscious elevation brimming his eye, he exclaimed within himself as he withdrew—"Twenty years have not so frozen my blood, that I could not shed its last drop for the good word of such an officer as this!"

The cavalier indeed saw himself surrounded by the brave of the past age — they, by whose steady opposition to the

sword of oppression, peace had been won for so long a time for Protestant Germany; and the humblest of its champions were, objects of reverence in his eyes. — Its cause was then at his heart. — And in a spot where so often the contest had been fought, he found his spirit perhaps the more stirred on the subject. The motives which brought him into these borders, had been imparted to Ernest alone, on the summit of the Brochen; the mountain-pinnacle of the Hartz; whence, while viewing the fair and smiling vales beneath, he pointed his most persuasive arguments. — But the expectations then, mutually excited, were still too dependent on many contingencies, for an implicit trust on the part of the cavalier; and the crowning of his enterprise seeming, as at first, yet to hang on the participation of Prince Christian, with a sigh he re-opened the papers he had dried below from the wet, and inwardly exclaimed

— "Oh, my friend, where am I now to seek thee?" —

Having begun to make some necessary memorandums, he was searching in the packet for a register of importance he wanted, and missed, when a gentle tap at his door disturbed him. He rose to see who was there; when the motion appearing an assent of admission, the latch opened; and before the cavalier could advance, the forest-master entered, bearing a candle in one hand, and a small coffer in the other.— He came forward with apologies for this intrusion, mixed with expressions of pleasure at finding his guest not gone to rest; and setting down his load, "My errand," said he, "I trust will plead my excuse for so unseasonable an appearance! — We part to-morrow; and I could not sleep to-night, till I had unburthened my mind of an anxiety, that has stationed there ever since I heard some certain words drop from your lips. — My fields are over, but I re-

member what led to them!" — He paused for some encouraging reply, but received none, except an acquiescent bow. — They were both standing while he spoke; and observing also, that the cavalier did not change his position, but remained in that unwelcoming attitude looking on the ground, the good Spielberg began to apprehend that his own ardent patriotism had urged him too far with a stranger; though he still thought himself sure of not having mistaken his object; and with something rather of confusion in his manner, he resumed. — "Allow me to repeat,—the motive of this intrusion must be my advocate. — For, though ignorant of your name, noble sir, I have seen enough, and heard enough, this evening, to be assured I am speaking to one of the leading defenders of our faith. But I too well remember my own duty as a soldier, to express even a conjecture of who that brave officer may be, whose present service requires his con-

cealment. — Yet, from your words, I venture to guess one object of your mission! — And, if I am right — that coffer contains 500 gold ducats. — They will fight for our suffering brethren, in whatever country the iron be now pressed to their souls! — Accept it, and Magnus Spielberg will no longer regret his own arm is withered."

"Baron!" cried the cavalier, "to such men as you, it is not easy to retain any reserve. — But the disclosures which are not exactly our own, no man has a right to make beyond the line prescribed. — Such an order locks my breast at present; otherwise, Magnus Spielberg, whom —" the cavalier hesitated in some little agitation — and then more calmly resumed; — "whom I must revere for more reasons than I can explain at present — he should this moment know the name of his guest, and what is his errand. — But this much I may confide to so proved a friend of the great cause, that

my object is the same as his own! I come to this country, in your opinion so secure, to warn it of its own dangers; not to recruit resources for a distant land. — Your generous subsidy must reach invaded Hungary by other hands than mine."

There was a pause after this, and both looked down; neither knowing exactly what to say next, though their minds were busy on the great subject nearest the hearts of both. — The baron, however, soon saw the embarrassment of continuing in the room of his guest after such an explanation; and particularly under the appearance of a final silence. — "Cavalier," cried he, "it is enough! I feel I plight faith with a true man; — and if ever your cause wants men or money, remember that Magnus Spielberg has fifty stout yeomen families on his own patrimony, to recruit from; and the produce of as many farms, to throw into their military chest. — I have no children —

no kindred, in fact; therefore, what I have is all my country's!"

The cavalier pressed the brave hand fervently between his, which was then so bounteously stretched out to bestow;—and, while he repeated his thanks, he more explicitly asured him, that the present situation of his mission required no pecuniary aid; but, he added, "there might come a time when every honest arm ought to be extended to its utmost, to preserve that good land in the state he then saw it:—and should that deprecated hour ever arrive," rejoined he, "I will claim your offer."

There was so much frankness in this reserve; so much confidence of a future fidelity, while rejecting the immediately proffered friendship; and so respectfully firm a tone in the mode of rejection, that the veteran of sixty years bowed without a remonstrance to this young soldier.—The tone of authority, indeed, seemed habitual to him, though free from any

arrogant assumption; being, in fact, only natural to an early maturity of judgment, proved to itself by a daily reference from persons of every age and quality. — Such judgment was not so much the fruit of time, as of that presence of mind, which, acting from an intuitive genius, sees at once what is best to be done, and immediately puts its dictates into execution. — Promptitude was the axis of his character; and his first voluntary step in life decided its object to the end. — In after times, Prince Christian himself told it to Spielberg.

" See that stripling soldier!" said his first Austrian commander, one day in the imperial presence: " he was born with a veteran's helmet — and I claim its crest of your majesty!"

The young adventurer had taken the chelenk of the Ottoman Pacha, while attacking him hand to hand in the surprisal of his camp on the banks of the Drave. — But that glittering ornament,

transferred to his simple morion, was the least of his ambition. — The blood in his heart was not shed for such toys — and better perhaps, for his own peace, and the safety of thousands, had the trophy been reserved, and the remark spared to the Emperor Rodolph in the presence of his haughty kinsman, Ferdinand of Styria.

That prince having failed in the quarter of the camp, where the prompt valour, thus eulogised, recovered the day, he could ill brook the averting of every eye while the commendation was uttered; as if all were conscious to the shame with which a sense of comparison was then crimsoning his cheek. — A glance from one dark countenance, however, met his; and the scornful smile which accompanied the menacing flash, that dark countenance cast on the youthful hero while kneeling before his sovereign to receive the distinction he had won, was welcomed by one equally expressive from Ferdinand;

and the mutual compact pledged that night over a brimming bowl —a chalice of hatred,—though daily poured through succeeding years, was not found drained to the dregs.

Envy, thou black spirit, that "brought death into the world, and all our woe!" thy bosom is nature's hell; for where thou abidest, paradise itself would perish!

How different was the feeling towards his unknown guest, which animated the manly observation of the veteran Spielberg! — Without a touch of mortified dignity, whether as a man or a soldier, at having his proffered services in a manner rejected, he lingered an instant ere he withdrew, to express a hope, that his future acquaintance with the name of his country's friend, was not entirely to depend on his country's threatened distresses? — The assurance, that it should not, was cordially given; and once more affirming mutual reliance, they shook hands, and parted for the night.

CHAP. V.

NEXT morning the travellers of the Hartz quitted their chambers a little after dawn; but on re-assembling in the hall, where they met their host with a plentiful repast, one of the party was found missing. Their dark-browed companion had left the lodge at the first gleam of light; but consigning a note for the chasseurs to Ruthard's charge, it was presented to Ernest by the forest-master; and along with it another paper, which Spielberg had picked up himself near the brazen pillar, when he first came into the hall that morning. At sight of the latter, Ernest handed it to the cavalier; who, with a start, immediately perceived it to be the very sheet he had been seeking, when the unexpected visit

of their host had broken in upon his occupation.

"Its contents are sacred," observed the baron, "I found it on that spot; and aware it could not be my own, none was so proper to receive it from me as the master of this house, while he remains in it."

Ernest noticed the good fortune of its having fallen into such safe hands. And while the cavalier was expressing his thanks, George did not escape a reprimand from his brother, for having omitted to gather it up with the others he had assisted to spread before the fire. The young prince did not recollect any such carelessness on his part, but concluding it must have been so, begged pardon of the cavalier; and while it was readily granted, Ernest read the note of their companion, which merely contained an adieu to the whole party, with a promise they should all know the reason of his thus forsaking them, — "when that

mighty huntress, fortune, would again bring the Lion and the Bear together, under shadow of the Brochen."

"We accept the sign!" said the prince, with a smile to the cavalier, as he raised the stirrup-cup to his lips; "and so I pledge him."

The morning was fair and balmy; and just as the sun peered between the mossy crags bordering the Ilse, whose pinnacled summits, no longer encumbered with threatening clouds, shot up into a sky of clearest ether, the travellers, refreshed and cheerful as the birds which now sang from every spray, issued from the lodge gate to recommence their journey. — The baron had proffered his services to attend them to the mines in their way; and buoyant as themselves at feeling himself riding in this dear familiar converse with the sons of his loved and honoured lord, the whole scene lay in more than usual beauty before him. — The vast tracts of the forest opened in brightened

verdure and profound peace. — Not even a zephyr ruffled the "multitudinous leaves;" though the ground, broken and channelled by the torrents of the night before, and strewed with huge boughs from the dismembered trees, gave sufficient witness of a recent tempest. — The wind had dried the main path, but the hollows were yet full of the fallen rain; which, like fairy lakes under the shade of the linden or light sycamore, reflected the glancing sunbeams, as they shot obliquely through the deeper vistas of the woodland.

During their ride, the calm, sequestered security of the immense solitude around them, seemed to open every heart to each other; and the cavalier almost forgot that he had any reserves from their veteran friend, when no strange ear could possibly be within hearing of the unshackled liberty of mutual confidence. — He observed with pleasure, the glistening eyes of the baron, when the elder prince

explained his reason for travelling unknown through the dominions of his father: — That he might witness the real state of all conditions of the people, without restraint; and he rejoiced to say, that every where he had found content and happy industry; every where he had heard the mild, parental reign of his father gratefully praised, without allowing him a possible suspicion of flattery mingling with the tribute. — To preserve the country in this state was indeed the burthen of all the cavalier's rejoinders; being careful to shew George, that it was not war he loved for its own sake, but war to good purpose; war, to establish justice; and, by consequence, an abiding citadel from all oppression or invasion.

While they thus conversed, Spielberg learnt, that his military guest did not commence this tour of observation with the sons of his prince; but had accidentally fallen in with them even so lately as

the morning before, at the top of the Brochen. — This information was given incidently by George; who, warming with "the wonderful, the wild," of the views before them, burst forth into a rapturous recapitulation of his delight on ascending the sublime summit of that mountain, whence he had beheld the vast sylvan paradise around him, to the very horizon. — All was then paradise to that young and happy heart: and, one way or other, the baron was enabled to gather from the same ingenuous speaker, added to the occasional intimations of his companions, something of the following particulars.

The dark-browed traveller had encountered the brothers the day before, on the southern borders of the Hartz; and they were all three gazing around from the highest point of the Brochen, on villages, towns, and the spires of distant cities, rising from the woods or plains, or deeply embosomed valleys,

when the cavalier approached them from behind the high mound on the rock, commonly called the Giant's Grave. — Tradition told of its covering the remains of the Great Witikind, of warlike memory; and that once in every century his august form, crowned and in arms, appears in the clouds above the mountain; galloping forth on an aerial horse, black, or white as snow, according to his errand on earth, of judgment or mercy. — George was calculating the time for the expected return of this royal apparition, just as the cavalier's noble and martial figure made its appearance from the misty cliffs of the tomb.

In passing through the forest, he had learnt from one of the servants left at the bottom of the mountain, that the Prince of Celle and Luneburg, was above; and only one prince of that title possessing his thoughts, he ascended immediately; hoping to meet the man he indeed sought, his beloved friend, and

camarade of the Drave. — The servant, whom vanity had induced to divulge the name of his master, from the same motive attended the cavalier to point him out; not indeed being aware that he was to be addressed by the person to whom his indiscretion had betrayed his trust. — A glance, however, brought disappointment to the cavalier, as to the positive individual whom he sought; but still part of his object might be gained; and, though circumstances made it necessary that he, also, should travel not generally recognised, those very circumstances commanded a disclosure of himself to any prince of the two leading houses of Brunswick; which were those of Celle-Luneburg, and Wolfenbuttel. — The head of the latter family was in Denmark. — Here was the heir of the first, the elder brother of the friend he came to seek! — And sending forward the servant, (to the man's surprise, but he feared to disobey the sort of personage who gave the com-

mand,) a request was made to Ernest, for a moment's audience. — The benevolent courtesey habitual to all the brothers, granted it instantly, though only asked in the name of a stranger. The cavalier came forward. A word introduced him to the prince; and walking away with him amongst the rocks, a brief, but comprehensive conversation, explained his lonely journey. — The object was momentous; and demanding reference to the duke himself, it was arranged between the two new friends, that after the brothers had obeyed their father in visiting the mines of Ramelsberg, then in the direct line of their route, the cavalier should proceed with them to Celle.

The conference over, Ernest led him towards his brother and their dark-visaged companion. — The latter turned pale, and smiled even ghastly, on seeing the cavalier. — For he who so looked on him, was the very man whose malignant rivalry had made communion with the answering

spirit in the breast of Ferdinand, only a few years before; and though he had not seen him since, and the then slender proportions of the youthful winner of the Chelenk, were now expanded into all the dignity of a soldier's manhood, yet he was immediately recognised by the twin mind of the Styrian prince. The cavalier, not being aware of the enmity of this person, whose birth and station had formerly often brought him in his way; nor indeed suspecting his intimacy at all with the insiduous enemy of the cause at his heart, met the salute of his old acquaintance with the cordial frankness of a man who had fought in the same field t — though there had always existed that difference of opinions and pursuits between them, which prevents the familiarity of real companionship.

This man, Bernhard de Saxe, was indeed descended from the ambitious race of Albert the Bear, to whom treachery had transferred the honours of Saxony

from the family of Henry the Lion, in the twelfth century. — A similar circumvention deprived his immediate ancestor of the electorate, long before his own birth. — Born in a prison, and cradled in the arms of a mother, daring as the outlawed freebooter who was her sire, and whom she had seen perish on a scaffold before the window of her dungeon, Bernhard's first milk was gall. Both his parents died in his infancy; but he fell into the tuition of those who told him what he might have been. He saw the great dignity of his forefathers possessed by another family; he found himself hardly noticed by the brothers of his blood, because his mother had been the daughter of the criminal Grumbach; he knew that had not his father been cast so low, he never could have drawn his life from such a mother. — Bitterness, then, was the food of his youth also; and in the recesses of his heart, (for open measures of any kind were not in his

character,) he swore, that when arrived at years of maturity, he would take some notable revenge on all who had assisted in the fall of his father's house.

Hence he detested the reigning Emperor, as the representative of him who had humbled his family to a second rank in Germany. Next he hated the name of Luther, and all who adopted his tenets, because, by having embraced those doctrines, his progenitors had incurred the excommunication of the Pope, and all their subsequent misfortunes. — But from the time he became master of what he premeditated as the means of vengeance, his pride rose with his pretensions; and the nature of his devices deepening the moodiness of his character, he kept the whole in his bosom with true jesuitical caution; only revealing a point here and there, to spirits like his own, fonder of ambuscade than fair fighting. —To his cotemporaries in general, he appeared a zealous Calvinist; and a faithful subject

of the Emperor Rodolph — "Because, (he said,) he had given quiet to religious contests."

But in reality, Bernhard's religion was whatever suited his convenience; his loyalty had no steadier principle; and his ambition hovering towards any height of power or title he might obtain by any means, with a hawk's sagacity he readily stooped to rise. — Some men's pride, or rather dignity, will not compass distinction but by honourable steps; and such was the pride of the cavalier, who would not have put the crown of Germany on his brow, must he have reached it by grovelling. — But Bernhard de Saxe cared not, so he atchieved his purpose, whether it were by fair or foul paths; whether he obeyed the prince or the free-booter in his blood. Self-aggrandisement being the measure of his actions, and scorn the meed of every opposing quality, he promptly became the creature of Ferdinand of Styria; whose aims, daring and

insidious as his own, were as ready to sap, or to overthrow, in any way, every barrier between him and his object.

With Ferdinand, this object was the imperial throne. And while he, in conjunction with his dark ally, was laying his plans in the glooms of different seclusions, deep and mysterious as the mithratic caves; and whence, like their impostors of old, he dispatched his adepts to the upper world; amongst a people ignorant of his hidden designs, and the true purpose of his misleading subtilties; Matthias, the real aim of all, had become aware of some parts at least of his ambition; (though without discovery of his emissaries), and with a corresponding vigilance, and equal secrecy, was digging his countermines, and accomplishing his agents, for the moment of contest. — But the mines once finished, and the trains laid on either side, — for the effects of the explosion, not only on the pomp of kingdoms, but the wreck of private

families, with the happiness of thousands,—who can answer!

Bernhard de Saxe no sooner cast his eye on the cavalier, and learnt that he was travelling unknown, than, according to his habit of suspecting every unusual appearance, he determined to watch whatever might occur between Ernest of Celle, and this well-remembered victor of the Drave. And he did not leave their companionship, without taking warrant with him for the old emblem of his ancestry again bearing on his brow the badge of its ancient dominion.

As far as related to the meeting of the Brunswick princes with these two personages of such different characters and objects, the forest-master obtained every information; and even the name of the moody descendant of the Bear was not withheld from him. For Ernest remarked, that while he and his brother travelled incognito for the reason given before, and the cavalier held the same

reserve from necessity, Bernhard de Saxe assumed the like in caprice; at the same time making a proposal, to which they all agreed, to dismiss their servants on to Goslar, to await them there, while themselves would explore at leisure the more remote wonders of the mountain and the forest. Ernest had seen enough of the liberal comforts of its villagers, to be assured that his horse would fare as well as its master, under the hospitable sheds of the Hartz; and the cavalier having disposed the chief of his attendants in a place of rendezvous at the foot of the mountain, the whole party set forward to traverse its wilds.

George, who had wandered with peculiar delight over the head of the Brochen till the dense mists covered it, caught up this point of the discourse; and expatiated with all the eagerness of youth exulting in its first grappling with danger, on their descending the huge Alpine crags, through the shadowy and treacherous

obscurity; sometimes assisted, and at others impeded, by the tall larches shooting athwart, or intermingling their roots and huge branches over the gaping ravines. But his greatest transport was in clambering down the almost naked cliffs, which overhung the roaring torrent below.

Perhaps it may seem strange to say, but while the cavalier attended to this account, and marked the enthusiasm of the speaker, he saw in his mind's eye the same vision as when he glanced at the adventurous boy in his perilous descent. Not the precipices of nature, mantled in clouds; but the thundering battlements of some besieged town:—its dreadful breach—to be assailed or defended by that young and intrepid arm! His eyes were fixed on the animated describer. George turned his towards him, and they met. He blushed, he knew not why; but he felt a something stir within him, to make the courses of his blood run

swifter, whenever he encountered that powerful look. He had been only two days in this man's company, and yet he seemed to have grown years older by that short contact; for he grasped at rivalling that man!

During this dumb, but eloquent communion between the spirits of George and the cavalier; Ernest, avowing his panic, while descending the height in such a gloom, congratulated himself on their having passed the granite labyrinths of the Ilsen valley, before the rolling down of the incumbent clouds over the rocky shores of the river had rendered its always uncertain fords more difficult to find.

"It was not," he said, "until we entered the wild upland glens of the Oker, that the weight of the tempest closed upon us; and then, soon after losing the beaten track, and all knowledge where we were, we became bewildered in the supernatural darkness of the forest,

till the explosion of the elements burst over our heads, and, with a torch of Heaven's own kindling, lit us home to the hall of our fathers!"

"Yes!" replied the baron, with a smile; "I now understand Bernhard de Saxe's exposition of the oracle!—and shall not again regret the fall of *the Fowler's* canopy, since its towering summit attracted that bolt, which might otherwise have struck the humbler stems, then sheltering his descendants.

CHAP. VI.

Such discourse having more than beguiled the way over a country, now in every respect a beautiful commentary on the sublime terrors of its former appearance, the travellers gradually approached the rugged defiles of Ramelsberg. In riding down the steep brow of the black and craggy moor, which flanks the principal ravine leading to the great silver mine of the mountain, George made an exclamation, on catching a momentary view of the grey towers of the oldest capital of the empire; Goslar, the seat of her sovereigns, even before the light of Christianity had shed its beams on pagan Germany. A heavy and lurid smoke from the neighbouring works of the miners, and smelters of the ore, driven by its own impulse, was rolling in volumes towards

the city, where, from the stillness of the atmosphere not assisting the vapour forwards, it settled; and soon spreading over the whole place in the form of a vast sulphureous canopy, its dark misty curtains deepened around, till they closed in at last the very walls from the spectator's eye. Emblematic, indeed, of the shroud of time, which had dropt between Goslar and its former honours—once the emporium of a great empire, crowded with tributary princes,—now a town of mere manufacture, a depot of artisans, black and sombre in outward guise, seeming to mourn its departed grandeur.

A narrow gorge to the left, pointed directly to the suburbs. In passing the mouth of its long craggy vista, the travellers, turning their heads, perceived several horsemen coming along it in full speed; and, at a second glance, George recognized two of them as part of their own corps of domestics, whom they had

sent forward to the city. With some wonder at such apparent haste, for the men spurred at sight of their masters, the princes and their friends rode forwards in that direction, and at a quickened pace also. In a few minutes they met, and the servants threw themselves off their horses, to approach their masters. Trouble was in their looks; and one, without speaking, bowing low, put a letter into the hand of Ernest.

"From whence?" he asked.

"An express from Celle," was the answer, and in a voice hardly audible.

The prince broke the seal; but scarcely seemed to have fixed his eyes on the contents, when dropping the hand that held it, on the head of his horse, an undistinguishable exclamation escaped him, while covering his face with his other hand. George, who had dismounted, and was at his side, immediately attempted to seize the opened paper, but Ernest, feeling the touch, grasped the letter close; as if by

that, he could have retained its bitter tidings to himself alone.

"George!" cried he, looking at his brother with an assumed calmness, "we must hasten home. My father is ill."

"But only ill?" demanded he; "say, my father is alive?" cried he, turning to the servants, with a sudden stop in his buoyant heart; for the quivering lip of his brother, who vainly tried to answer him, made him fear the worst.

"Our honoured sovereign yet breathed, when the courier came off in search of your highness," rejoined the man; "but fatal effects from a second fit were momentarily dreaded."

The filial grief, which at these words changed every recent expression in the countenance of the young prince, was like the hues of night falling at once upon the brightness of day. Every beautiful feature was convulsed, and with a groan that seemed to burst his heart, he would

have fallen to the ground, had not the cavalier caught him in his arms. The whole party were then dismounted. Tears came to his relief; and on that brave bosom, which felt no shame in sympathy, he wept with all the restrainless despair of youth and affection on its first acquaintance with grief. His mother having died when he was hardly ten years of age, he scarcely knew that loss; but his father, not more honoured than endeared to him, by long daily communion, and parental kindness, — that would be deprivation indeed!

His brother having subdued the first effect of the shock on himself, which, severe as it was, he had borne with presence of mind, inquired of the servant what other particulars the courier had brought. For the letter being only one of several to the same purport, dispatched in as many different directions to find the princes somewhere in their tour, it contained little more than a brief statement

of a sudden and dangerous illness of the duke having made it necessary he should immediately summon his sons to his presence.

The courier had arrived at Goslar only half an hour before these servants set forth in search of their masters; for the man, having been out all the preceding night in the storm, was not deemed in a state to deliver the letter in person. And the information he brought imported, that the duke had been seized with an alarming kind of fit, but after a copious bleeding, became sufficiently revived to hold a short council with his ministers, from his bed. The exertion, however, proved beyond his strength, and he fainted on their withdrawing from the room. Animation had been restored when the messenger cameoff; but a second attack was hourly expected, that must terminate his invaluable life. During council, he had expressed his wish to have all his sons, if possible, brought to

receive his blessing; and though no time was lost in making the summons, little expectation could be entertained of finding Prince Christian at that immediate juncture; the last accounts of his proceedings having spoken indeed of his leaving France, but no one knew exactly in what direction.

This relation of the servant, renewed the filial emotions of both brothers; and the forest-master stood in mute sorrow, leaning on his horse. The cavalier tried to give them some consolation, by observing, that if the duke were really so near the point of dissolution as the narrator described, his well-ordered mind would be too sensible of its approach, to call his sons to a scene which must have been long over before his messengers could reach them. The very circumstance of his physicians having permitted him to hold a council, proved he could not be in an actually expiring state; though fatigue, after so copious a bleeding, might

might very naturally put on that appearance. Yet, with all these arguments of comfort, the cavalier did not the less urge his friends, to make all speed to the venerable presence which demanded them. Any glimmering of hope soon lights up the anxious breast, though with a transient brightness — and George especially reviving under the soothing persuasions of their friend, with a smile of grateful confidence in the assurances he wished to believe, vaulted into his saddle, calling cheerfully to his brother, — "Forward, Ernest! and let us halt no more till it be at the side of our father!" But the thought of how that meeting might indeed be prevented, smote again on his heart; and having uttered the revered name, he stopped speaking, with a gush of emotions that almost choaked him.

Ernest wrung the hand of the cavalier "You will accompany us?"

"Could I not serve you better?" asked he, looking southward.

"Yes," faltered the prince; "seek my brother! Should we be bereaved, I shall need his counsels in every way."

A few words more, passed in lowered voices between Ernest and his friend; after which the whole party went on the spur towards the barrier gate of Godlar. A travelling carriage, with four horses, awaited the arrival of the brothers. George, without venturing to speak, for an attempt at articulation would have betrayed his again relinquishment of hope, answered the parting grasp of the cavalier's hand, by leaning from his horse as he dismounted, and with his trembling lips touching the clouded brow of his kindly intended comforter.

"God bless you!" breathed in the most cordial accents from that true heart, over the dewy cheek that pressed his.

"God restore my master!" was the soul's inward response of another not less faithful bosom.

The sad party then separated. The princes, on their sorrowful journey to Celle; the cavalier, in the tract in which he hoped to learn tidings, at least, of Prince Christian; and the good forest-master, nearly stupified with the suddenness of the stroke which seemed to have cut him off from all he had so long loved and honoured, — the revered link, which united his past life with the present, — he, with a desolated sense of no longer belonging to the passing interests of this world, — took his melancholy course back to his woodland hall.

CHAP. VII.

From the hour in which the illness of its venerable duke was known throughout the town of Celle, every amusement, and all kinds of business, became at a stand. Crowds from the neighbouring hamlets flocked to the market-place, to enquire after their dying sovereign; and when strangers mingled in the group, they saw nothing but bewailing apprehension, or the awful stillness of silently expecting sorrow. Parties stood in the streets, with dejected countenances, discussing the last reports from the castle; and occasionally turning their eyes to the floating colours on its flag-staff, which yet told that the father of his people still lingered amongst them. Some travellers out of Styria joined in the discourse; and with apparent sympathy would have en-

quired the particulars of so great a consternation; but in the relief of so many surcharged hearts, uttering all they felt respecting the object of general anxiety, these strangers gained whatever information they wanted, without the trouble of asking a question. One old citizen talked of the duke having summoned his sons to take his last leave of them; and a servant from the castle answered him, with an account of the arrival of them all, excepting Prince Christian; "who, however," he remarked, "was hourly expected, though every body feared it would be too late to find his father amongst the living."

"And to whose heritage, amongst those seven sons, we shall be allotted in the testamentary partition of the country by our good duke, who can guess?" sighed one of the listeners.

Another answered, "None can guess; but we all know who we wish."

"Yes," interrupted a grey-headed burgher; "but princes have a birthright, as well as common men; and who of us would like to be put aside from our heirship, by our father or tenantry, because they like our younger brother better? Luneburg and Celle ought, in right, to be the portion of Prince Ernest, — he being the first-born, and hence heir to the best."

"Hence," rejoined one of the former speakers, "you would have us infer, that we can have no just hope of following our brave prince, the defender of the French Hugonots, to the defence of our own faith and properties, should they ever be assaulted?"

"But in such extremity," asked one of the Styrians, "would not Duke Ernest be as sure a leader?"

"Doubtless," was the reply, "if he would lead us. But not certain of his being so staunch a Protestant as his wel-

tried brother, we cannot but wish to have him at our head, who has proved the temper of his steel."

"Nay, nay," resumed the burgher, "do not wish evil, that good may come of it! Depend on it, God will take care of his own people in his own way; but fraudulent means on our parts, like the profane priests throwing false fire into the sacred censors, might only draw Divine chastisement upon ourselves. The duke is a just man; and bequeathing Celle to his first-born, must, in the customary fashion, divide the less considerable districts amongst the younger brothers. If ye, therefore, affect your choice, do it with justice, and follow Prince Christian to whatever may be his allotment."

"Whatever be in birth-right," interrupted a somewhat less hoary citizen, though a scar across his forehead shewed he had not always dwelt in such security, "you, my respected neighbours, ought

to know, that our duke has the power to divide as he choses. And accordingly, gentlemen," added he, turning to the listening Styrians, " a petition is now making out, to go in to the expiring duke, — and God grant he may live to receive it! — imploring him, by all the horrors of Saint Bartholomew, which took place this day thirty years ago, — and from which impious carnage, his own father the ever memorable Ernest the Confessor, then a guest in Paris, escaped as by a miracle! — by the sacred blood then shed in martyrdom, he is besought to bequeath the most powerful division of his dominions to the arm best qualified to defend the whole; — to the son, who has assisted in bringing Christian toleration, and, therefore, a healing balm to the wounds of our bleeding brethren in desolated France."

" Heaven's blessing on such a petition!" was the almost universal response. For though all loved the duke's sons,

as fine young men and courteous; yet Christian alone having thrown himself into manly service, he at once commanded their wishes, with their admiration and confidence.

His character was indeed no common one; and till his action proved its purpose, few understood the aspirations of his warm and noble heart. More, had he been less than a prince, would have ridiculed him; contempt of high sentiments and great aims, being the usual refuge of those poor spirits who have not souls to attain to either. From infancy, Christian possessed that powerful energy which must ever act from himself, though not for himself. Self-gratification, as a motive, never entered his thoughts. To befriend, to protect, to extend happiness, those were the first impulses of his mind; and to these purposes he directed all his studies, all his exercises, nay, all his pleasures; — for he knew no pleasure but in producing it, or seeing it enjoyed by

others. Paradise would have been a desert to Christian, had he possessed it alone. Nay, Deity itself seems to sanction this necessity for participation in happiness, to complete its perfection; by that all-sufficient goodness having created other beings, to share the bliss of heaven.

At Christian's entrance into life, he found a wide field for the peculiarities of his character to expatiate on. The truths of the Reformation were agitating the world; and, like the primeval separation of light from darkness, the convulsion shook nature to its centre. It was, indeed, the good spirit struggling with the ill, — the spirit of purity and true regeneration, with that of vicious indulgence and purchased false absolution. Some sages studied religion as a science only; others considered it a vital principle; and many merely to render it null and void. With the same difference in motive, the field was entered under the banner of truth: — some defending the

persecuted from gallantry of arms alone, — others, because " as much as they did it unto one, the least of his brethren," they did it unto their Divine master! — and many joined the combat merely to carry off the spoil. Such, indeed, is the field of the world. The tares and the wheat grow together. But because tares are there, there is no reason why the reapers should sleep in the harvest till the whole be withered! And the sun of truth once revealed, it behoves all men to defend their freedom, — to gather in its fruits.

Young as Christian was, when in his early boyhood he took the deep-hewn blade of Henry the Lion into his hand, he then resolved, that when he should draw his own sword, the cause must be like that of his victorious ancestor, — one for which he could fight from every principle of his soul. Therefore, he threw his whole soul into the great objects of the momentous era in which he was

born; and, perhaps, when the beardless youth volunteered his sword's first use on the plains of Hungary, and afterwards marched to the succour of oppressed France, there was not a veteran in either contest who better knew the grounds of the faith for which he was ready to shed his blood. Christian's religion was like the lily borne by the angel messenger to the virgin; emblematic of the region whence it came, and whither it was to lead him; pure as innocence, and fragrant with the incense of a happy heart.

Many of his young companions questioned him, whether any other object than glory, constituted the ever sun-shining brightness of that heart; which indeed shone in his eyes, and gave an impulsive glow of the same joyous satisfaction wherever he came. But to them he smiled only, and asked whether glory were not enough? In the depths of that heart he cherished the dear secret, like an enshrined fire in some holy ark.

Twice during his campaigns in France he had visited his home, covered with the badges of this early glory; all of which he laid at the feet of the object of his secret vows; and secret, only because he loved too intensely to even dare breathe it almost to herself, till sanctioned by the claims of his character in the paths he had ever admired with enthusiasm; — a path in which his father had trod before him, with an energy like his own; — therefore, he sealed his lips till he could bring a well-earned name to both: — when, if his declared devotedness to her should meet the return, his heart felt the delightful consciousness would be his, then he should demand her of his father, as his sweetest, dearest reward. A union with her, would be one of true domestic joys; the gaudes and ceremonies of a court, not having room to intrude under the simple roof likely to be his inheritance. Adelheid had no princely kindred, to bring their splen-

dours to her abode; at least none who knew of her existence, or would acknowledge her if they did. She was the solitary child of the expatriated Count and Countess de Truchses Waldburg; their unconscious offspring, who, on that unhappy pair taking to flight, no one knew whither, the dying mother of Agnes confided to the maternal care of the Duchess of Celle, the friend of her youth; and with it, an earnest entreaty to bury the real birth of the child in everlasting oblivion. Its parents had been deprived of their titles and territories, and also outlawed by a decree from the Imperial Chamber; nay, yet more cruelly so by the kindlessness and avidity of those who, whether as relations or as rivals, benefited by the division of their property. When de Truchses left his daughter with her grandmother, it was with the declared resolution (which hurried the aged parent to the grave), that he never would return to Germany,—never claim a child, whose

future fate could only be blighted by his name.

When the old countess died, she had the satisfaction of knowing in her last moments, that the duchess did not merely receive the sacred charge consigned to her protection, but had adopted it into her own family. In short, the poor little deserted one, who appeared likely to inherit all her mother's fatal beauty, was introduced to the ducal nursery under the title of the Lady Adelheid alone — the orphan daughter of friends and kinsfolk of the duchess, now no more. The numerous noble branches from her paternal house — the regal stem of Denmark — made this little history not at all incredible. But when the duchess was herself called away from this world, which calamity to her family occurred just as Adelheid had attained her thirteenth year, she deemed it right to reveal to her adopted child the real facts of her birth. No other bosom, except the

duke's, had been made privy to the secret; and no other than his was intended by his dying wife ever to share it, with its innocent and unfortunate subject. But Adelheid could not hold a concealment from the one being, who had been to her as a brother from the time she first felt sensible to kindness; and of all her supposed young kinsmen, none had been so kind to her as Christian. He was a fine youth when she was little more than a child, but he cherished her as a sister; and when she grew old enough to appreciate his superior qualities, the ingenuous endearments of his affectionate heart, made her's all his own. And not unconsciously too, by her pure nature; for what is more natural, sacred, and delightful, than to love entirely what is most amiable and kind? To withhold a thought of that heart from him was then impossible; and when his filial grief mingled its tears with her's, for her they both called mother, Adelheid could not

refrain from pouring her own new, and secret cause of sorrow by inheritance, into his faithful breast.

From that time, Christian and she seemed to have but one soul; yet a thought, a word, of what might be styled lover's language, never passed between them. They felt they were every thing to each other, and to say it was needless; yet when time perfected the loveliness of Adelheid's mind, as well as gentle heart, Christian became aware that if she were not to be the companion of his future life, he should live as a man deprived of half his being. From the period of her losing her protectoress, the duke had placed her under other charge, from motives of propriety alone; for Adelheid was dear to him as a daughter. And sequestered with a venerable lady, her now female guardian, in a woody seclusion not far from Celle, thither Christian constantly went to visit his adopted sister, both before and after he

entered his military career, whenever circumstances brought him home. But omnipotent as he now knew the passion in his bosom, he felt equally apprehensive of perhaps losing the transporting tenderness with which she always met his fond affection, should he, by word or deed, intimating it was not merely as a brother *he loved but her alone*, alarm into reserve the consciousness of her ingenuous heart. It was sufficient to him to feel that he was beloved; to know by the occult sympathy of true tenderness, that she was happy in the conviction he was all her own, for him to await with hope the propitious hour of his avowal. And that hour would be when he should have wrought his day of duty, and proved to himself and to the world, that whatever might be his anticipated bliss in being her's, still it was not in him "to pass his noon of manhood in a myrtle shade!"

Such were his lofty feelings of self-denial at some times; in others, nature

clung with all its more melting yearnings, to the sweet endearments of her uninterrupted society; and to accomplish his task, and remain at a distance from her, he often struggled against his heart; both from her, and with her; and in the presence of his father. Refraining time after time, from confiding his long cherished wishes to that honoured parent, till he could say — "My father! give me thy blessing? And let it be, that companion for my life, who was formed to virtue and to loveliness, by her that was the blessing of your life, and who gave me being!"

From the generally understood relationship between them, nothing extraordinary appeared in the visits of Christian to his young kinswoman; and the duke would have been the last person to check so amiable a respect to his mother's memory, in her son. But Christian was not always to retain so locked a breast to Adelheid; even when he did not think

himself free to declare all that passed there to his father. Her picture had been on his heart in every battle; and once, the polished gold in which it was cased, glanced aside a musquet ball, which otherwise must have entered that vital part. In their first meeting after this event, and that was only during his last visit to his home, he could not forbear mentioning what had been his shield. The dread and the joy together, were too much for her long suppressed extent of feelings; and falling nearly insensible on the breast her shadowed image had protected, for the first time in his life since he had felt she was more to him than a sister, he pressed her to that heart which for years had beat alone for her and glory. The vows they then uttered were those of heaven itself; and the tears of the young warrior, now mingled blissfully with those of his beloved Adelheid.

In the moment of their separation, he put a ring on her finger. "When the

liberty of Lower Normandy is completed," said he, "when under the brave Navarre, its suffering people are rescued from death or apostacy, — then, my Adelheid, with their prayers for our nuptial benediction. I will open our hearts to my father — I will return to thee."

"To thee!" In those little words were comprised a sum of happiness to Adelheid, which already deprived her of utterance. Incapable of speaking, she dropped her head for a moment on his shoulder. Nor did she recollect distinctly any thing that was afterwards said between them, or how they parted; but she found herself cast on the little mossy seat in the garden, near which they had met to say *farewell!* He was gone; — and she rose to shut herself in her chamber — not to think of Christian! — for when did she not? He was as one with her thought; but to pray for him. And while invoking heaven for his preservation, she still felt herself companioned with him.

In after years Christian was indeed made to know, and to verify in himself, that such is the only true affection, whether it be love or friendship, — which forgets itself in the true advantage of its object, and by this touchstone it is proved.

By this touchstone, the citizens of Celle likewise, were hereafter to more fully know their prince. At present, his deepest sacrifices would be hidden from them. The Norman campaign was fought and gained. The news had flown to his home; from the castle to the town, from the town to the seclusion of Adelheid! And the path to the throne of France being now deemed fairly opened to the royal Protestant champion, the cause was concluded triumphant there. And when the victorious volunteers of Germany were thronging back to their domestic hearths, it was natural that many hearts in Celle, besides the paternal breast, and that which warmed towards him in the

bower of Helmstadt, should expect that Christian of Luneburg would be amongst the first to add his trophied crest to the bannered archives of his fathers.

" He more particularly bears that distinction attached to his name," replied an old soldier, to one of the Styrians; " because the brave Brunswickers who follow his standard, are chiefly commanded from the veteran families planted round that ever military town. And they have shared many chivalric honours with their prince, from the gratitude of Henry of Navarre," continued the martial speaker; " I have been present at the service, and the guerdon."

Christian, indeed, had made him a name in every field; the monarch ascribing to his persevering courage, the last blow which decided the famous battle of Ivry; to his intrepid steadiness, the admirable covering of the royal retreat on the Somme; to his undaunted resolution, the ultimate vic-

tory which compelled the great Farnese to evacuate the plains of Normandy.

"But before half of this could be achieved," exclaimed the old soldier, interrupting himself in the enthusiasm of his narrative; — "so signal were his services in effecting these important results, the king had exhausted on him all his insignia of honour; and when that royal hero presented to him the last star from his own breast — "*Luneburg!*" cried he, "*You have won all these! — You must now fight for my love alone!*"

"*More precious than them all!*" replied the prince, "opening his arms to the warm embrace of the brave Navarre. This passed in the field, and the acclamations of our soldiers, now ring in my ears."

This testimony of their prince's early maturity in arms, and consequent respect from foreign potentates, brightened every countenance, even in the midst of their

anxiety for his father; and the Styrians avowing an equal admiration, it did not seem unreasonable, when one of them, on the domestic of the castle turning away to the performance of his duty, expressed a wish to be admitted under its roof; there to await, perhaps favourable news of the duke, and to catch a sight of his renowned son, should fortune then bring him to the couch of his father.

But the scene that was closing there, no stranger eye was allowed to witness.

CHAP. VIII.

The duke lay upon a bed surrounded by his sons. An unexpected sleep, which the mistake of an attendant had represented to the couriers as a stupor, the precursor of dissolution, had so far revived him, that when his children arrived, he knew, and conversed with them all. Ernest, as eldest, sat at his right hand. The opposite seat ought to have been occupied by Christian, his second son. The rest of the princes, five in number, took their places in rotation. George, who was the youngest save one, knelt near the foot of his father's bed, by the side of his junior brother, a boy of ten years old. The physicians, and a minister of state, stood near the vacant chair which had been set in expectation of Christian's arrival.

Being propt up on his pillows, the dying prince, in a few summary particulars, recounted to his children the worth of their ancestors; not, he said, in pride of their illustrious titles, or the extent of their dominions; but in respect to the virtues which used those distinctions according to the high commission they implied from the King of Kings. "Men are made great," he observed, "not to please themselves, but to serve others: — and in fulfilling that duty, lies the proof and mark of sovereignty — the prerogative to confer benefits."

He then briefly observed, in evidence of this, that when Germany was first redeemed from the untrodden wilderness, by an overflowing population from the north-east, it became necessary for every newly planted nation to defend its possessions against the encroachments of subsequent emigrations; and in process of time, to repel with still more determined hardihood, the successive attempts of

foreign invasion. Such protectors, were Arminius against the Romans, Guelph against the Goths, Wittikend and Bruno, who perished for their country in the fields of Charlemagne. From a race of heroes emulous of such sires, and from age to age protecting their altars and their homes, descended the sword of Henry the Lion, still to maintain the same rights. "Time has not marred its edge!" added the duke; "and should it soon be drawn again, — as, in this my dying hour, I am led to apprehend! — you, my sons, must take care that it pass to yours untarnished!"

"So help us, Heaven!" — ejaculated Ernest, with a fervour unusual to him.

The duke heard the voice. The tone was so unlike his eldest son's; so much in the spirit of his second, that he turned his head with a rapid glance towards the point whence it proceeded; then to the side where Christian would have sat, had he been present, but the seat was vacant.

The disappointed parent closed his eyes for a moment, reproaching himself, however, for he felt that the principle was the same, from whichever breast the declaration had proceeded; and, indeed, being less expected from him who would shortly have the most power, it became the more estimable to its object, the more welcome to the expiring veteran. The duke breathed one internal prayer to the Almighty Being in whose presence he was himself so soon to stand, for the preservation of him, who was yet absent in the fulfilment of his duties; then looking towards his eldest son, he put forth his hand, and Ernest met a tender grasp, that told the approval of his parent's heart.

The duke next described the dominions of his ancestors; extensive, and abundant in every good, and held independent of any earthly potentate; neither foreign invaders, nor neighbouring encroachments, having been able to make any actual depredation on the territory of

their allodial inheritance — *till themselves weakened its strength by dividing it!*".

"Look here, my children;" continued he, taking up a bundle of arrows from a table near his bed. They were firmly bound together by a leathern thong. He bade the young princes try to snap any one of them in their present collected state. They separately obeyed, but the attempt, of course, was vain.

"So impregnable," cried the duke, "was the realm of your fathers, while they held it entire. But, take off the thong, and give me the arrows?"

Ernest did as he was commanded; and their father with small exertion of his own enfeebled hands, broke first one, and then another. "So," rejoined he, "I might with equal ease destroy them all, now they may be taken singly, unsupported by the relative strength of their brethren. In like manner, when your ancestors, from a short-sighted parental affection, disunited their country, by dismembering it into portions for

their several children, first one, and then another, became a prey to a stronger rival neighbour; or, if left unmolested, it was the peace of contempt, from a notion of each division's insignificance. Failure of heirs, in the course of time, re-united some of the separated limbs under the lineal head. Conquest recovered others from the powers which had usurped them; while to a subtilty, which politicians have approved, but your father never! one of our progenitors became possessed of that territory we now call Upper Bavaria."

Some marks of fatigue, shewed themselves in large drops on the forehead of the duke, at this part of his discourse; and at his request, that he might regain strength to proceed on the more momentous business of this interview, Everstein, the minister of state, took up the narrative. The substance of what he related was briefly this:

The prince in question, though the

son of Ethico, one of the most virtuous of the Guelphic race, was noted all over Germany for the licence of his life. Hence it may be concluded, that what he did in the way of gaining territory, was less from ambition, than as a means of purchasing pleasures equal to those he sometimes enjoyed at the imperial court. One day an opportunity for this aggrandisement presented itself. It was during a convivial meeting with Arnulph, the then emperor; who, in the heat of wine, made a wild offer to the son of Ethico, that he should hold as much land in fee of the empire as he could compass in one summer day with a chariot. The young prince was sufficiently himself to make the engagement positive with the monarch; and the morning arrived for the expedition. The whole court were assembled on an eminence to see the charioteer start; and concourses of people placed themselves as spectators, at the different resting distances in the circle,

which they calculated he might be able to complete from sun-rise to sun-set. What then was the surprise of all within view, to behold the prince present himself on a lightly caparisoned horse, known to be the fleetest of his stud; and before him, in front of his saddle, was buckled a small golden chariot! It need hardly be added, that he had it made for the purpose. Bowing smilingly to the emperor, but without a word, the trumpeters which preceded him blew. He stuck his spurs into the animal at the first blast, and was soon far from sight of the shouting multitude. Fresh horses awaited him at different stations; and by the time the sun of a midsummer's day went down, he had acquired a fief of nearly four thousand *mansi*, or measures of land — giving him, in fact, a territorial claim to the dukedom of Bavaria; which, after some remonstrance on the part of other princes of the empire, was at last awarded by Arnulph in redemption of his word; and from

that hour the Guelphic duke was designated in the imperial records by the name of *Henry of the golden chariot.*

" It still exists in that case," observed his venerable descendant, pointing to a casket of carved ebony, which stood in an old Gothic relicrie at the bottom of the room " Open it, George, and bring the contents to me?"

George's attention to the recital, having been particularly fixed, attracted the notice of his father; who, therefore, almost unconsciously, gave him this command, instead of speaking to any of his nearer brothers. The young prince obeyed, and opening the brass clasps of the old casket, took from it a small carriage, of the order described, about twenty inches long; and of a workmanship, considering the age of its manufacture, of a very exquisite kind. Time had indeed dimmed its metal to a rather bronze hue; but George, thinking of nothing less than examining it, presented

it in silence to his father. The duke held it towards his sons.

"My children," said he, "this curious piece of mechanism (worthy, perhaps, of your notice hereafter, on account of its nicety), was religiously preserved for some centuries, as a sort of dumb witness to our rights over the land it compassed." George's colour, which had heightened on his cheek when ordered to bring the chariot, now flushed over his whole face. The duke continued. "In aftertimes," said he, "it remained, like many other memorials of the family, a mere heir-loom; and I now shew it to you, to imprint on your minds, the danger, as well as folly, of voluntarily subdividing a patrimony of any consequence; since a sense of having so fallen into comparative weakness, has tempted one, and might another of our brave house, to tarnish the real lustre of his name by an act of debasing cunning."

"Rather let us perish!" cried Ernest. A murmur to the same effect, breathed

from the rest of the young men; but George sat silent, with his eyes fixed on the golden chariot.

"I could not doubt such a principle in my sons," resumed the duke. "And I proceed at once, to develope a plan long meditated, to prevent the probability of any one of the evils we have just deprecated becoming the lot of your posterity. My child," said he, accidentally observing him whose gaze was yet bent on the old heir-loom; — "pray take this away? Its weight oppresses me."

George obeyed with alacrity. "That it shall never do again to any of our race!" muttered he to himself; and snatching it from the bed, where it leaned against the breast of his father, he made but one spring to a window open for air, just over the moat; and throwing the golden treasure out, saw it strike to shivers on a projecting angle of the buttress, and fall, dispersed in a hundred fragments, into the deep water below.

"There!" cried he, "it is gone!—detested memorial of the only blot on the name of Brunswick!"

Ernest and Augustus, his elder brothers, gazed on each other with something of appalled wonder at this deed of temerity. Frederick and Magnus, the two nearest to him in age, rather forgetting the solemnity of the scene in momentary curiosity, hastily rose to see what was become of the precipitated chariot. John, the youngest of the group, hardly aware of the import of what had been told concerning it, felt in a sort of angry amazement at being thus deprived of an object, he had been wistfully contemplating for future amusement.

When the young prince saw the confusion this spontaneous act had produced in the lately attentive circle round his father's bed, he approached it himself with an immediate fear of having, by so rash a gratification of his before repressed

indignation, disturbed the last hours of that revered parent. The duke was indeed affected to the soul, but his emotion was silent. George threw himself on his knees beside him.

"Oh, my father!" cried he, "forgive me? — But I think, I could sooner have died than look on that badge of disgrace again!"

"When the latter words were uttered, the duke took his son's hands in his: — "My blessing rest upon thee, George!" cried he, "Thy father's heart went with thee, at that moment — and according to its prayer, may thee and thine be blest for ever!"

The duke's physicians now interfered; and feeling the pulse of their master, declared he could bear no more this evening; but promising, as far as their judgments went, that the final instructions to follow these preliminaries, might be safely deferred till the next morning, the exhausted invalid gently nodded his assent;

and after his sons had severally kissed his now tremulous lips, they withdrew, leaving him to his medical assistants, and his rest.

CHAP. IX.

WITH even a dawn of hope, the princes had retired to their chambers. But soon after the turn of midnight, a hasty summons recalled them to that of their father; where they found, in addition to its former attendants, Luitgard, his confidential chaplain, bending over his pillow. The reverend old man rose on the entrance of the brothers, and the physicians withdrew to the anti-room.

The duke had been seized with spasms, on awaking from the sleep into which he had gently sunk on the departure of his sons; and these wringing pains being succeeded by those inexplicable bodily sensations which warn the sufferer himself too surely of his quickly approaching dissolution, this anxious parent lost no time in sending for his children, from

their indeed haunted slumbers, to receive his dying injunctions, his last embrace.

When they re-entered, his countenance, before pale and wan, seemed now like one already in the grave. His voice was scarcely audible, yet they could hear him name them to the chaplain. None else spoke: and instead of taking their seats, they all knelt at his bed. He stretched out his hand in silence, and they kissed it one by one. It was very cold, and hardly distinguishable in colour from the sheet. The youngest boy, for the first time, felt a real apprehension he might lose his father, and sobbed aloud.

"My children! My dear children!" at last broke from the ashy lips of the duke: — "You are here, to begin, perhaps, a long career of probationary duty; I have only a few minutes left to complete mine! What your fathers did in theirs, I have already told you — the champions of our laws and religion, for

more than a thousand years! Their blood, warm in your hearts, urges in stronger language than my voice, though now from the confines of the grave, that you will not shrink from any self-sacrifice, to ensure the general aim of their lives—the end for which several of them died! —*to fulfil your duty as princes.*"

The duke then reminded them, that he had already pointed out the ruinous effects of dividing a sovereign territory. He acknowledged that too frequent precedents admitted the claims of all his sons to certain portions of the dominions he was then called upon to resign; but he relied on the true principles with which he had ever sought to imbue their minds, that no hesitation would be found in any of them, to prove their just claims to the honours of their births—by shewing *a supremacy in every patriotic virtue.*

"Your grandfather, Ernest the confessor," continued he, "the friend, and the disciple of Luther, protected him in

this castle, against half the empire. He was the first to publicly avow the doctrines of that great reformer's faith; and to his dying hour, he defended its professors with his wisdom, and his sword. — The present *Peace of Religion* was the consequence. But there are spirits rising around, which threaten further trials for our church and national freedom. — To meet those times, you must prepare; and the foundation of your power will rest in *maintaining the integral unity of the dukedom.*"

Much of what he meant to imply in this exhortation, was immediately conceived by Ernest and his brothers; and, without a dissenting voice in the momentary whisper which passed between them, he assured their father, they were each ready to surrender his own individual right to the general advantage; by submitting at once, to whomever of his seven sons he would select to be sovereign of the whole. — They all supposed

Christian was the object in the duke's thoughts; and Ernest, unfeignedly declaring his own lack of talents for war, though he trusted that his father could not doubt the courage of any of his sons!—added, "that should times arise, such as were presaged, none indeed could be considered so fit to rule, so competent to command, as his absent brother."

"No, my noble son!" rejoined the duke; "thine own disinterested spirit shall rule here in equity and peace, as long as Heaven grants thee life; and thy brother shall serve thee, and thy people, faithfully."

With these words, he made a sign to Everstein, the secretary of state, who held a written paper in his hand, previously dictated by the duke himself; and the minister, bowing to the command, read aloud these solemn wishes of his dying master:—"That the sovereignty of the entire dominions then under the sceptre of William of Celle,

Duke of Brunswick Luneburg, should be vested in his eldest son; and that on his demise, his surviving brothers should regularly inherit the same, according to precedency of birth."

The young men instinctively bent their heads to their brother, in sincere acquiescence, at the close of the last sentence. A short pause ensued, and then the minister continued.

"The next clause," said he, "is of a more private nature; and for the wisest reasons, if granted, ought to be held a secret of state."

This premised, Everstein turned to the paper and read again.

"To prevent the temptation, or rather any apparent necessity hereafter, to break up in the smallest degree this consolidation of power, another clause must be admitted, — namely, only one of the seven heirs to be allowed the privilege of marriage. And in the event of their consenting to this bond also, it is pro-

posed to commit the election to Providence, by their drawing lots for the future ancestor of the family. They who are yet in minority, will be called upon to ratify their present engagement at the age of maturity."

The brothers looked on each other. Three of them had arrived at the age of manhood. Magnus and George were yet youths, and John a child. With the latter, then, the request was likely to be readily granted.

"Consult together, my children!" resumed the duke; "all that you do for your country must be done voluntarily, and then it will be with your hearts. Whatever you decide, I will be the pledge, to the same effect, for your absent brother."

Ernest felt no hesitation in standing the hazard of renouncing a state to which his wishes, once blighted by female perfidy, no longer pointed; and a short conference apart, with Augustus and

Frederick, whose hearts had never been in a situation to bring the subject into question, soon confirmed the reply to be according to their father's wisdom. Ernest, then repeating what was determined, to his three younger brothers, received their spontaneous assent also; and immediately throwing himself on his knees by the duke's bed, in which action he was followed by the rest; and while all held up their clasped hands, he pronounced these words: —

"Here, my father! before God and you, we swear to maintain the government of our country, inviolate in the person of one sovereign, and according to the laws; and also every one of us to live in celibacy, excepting him to whom the lot from yon urn may assign a different fate."

Not doubting that such a resolution would be the result of his appeal to the best principles of his children, the duke had ordered a vase to be prepared for the

purpose; and motioning it to be brought towards him, he directed Everstein to hold it to Ernest, and thence successively to his other sons; each putting in his hand, drew out a sealed scroll.

"But who is to represent Prince Christian in this?" asked the minister.

"Myself," returned the duke; and the urn being presented to him, his trembling hand took forth a scroll. When all were drawn, he made a sign for their examination.

Ernest broke the seal of his — a blank. The fainting pulses in his father's bosom beat for a moment quicker; — he gave what he grasped in his own hand to Everstein. "Open it!" was the scarcely audible command. The minister did so — it was a blank. At the word, a pang of disappointment passed through the parental heart, which had not been aware of the wish that filled it, till it was thus destroyed; and hardly stifling an answering groan, he said within

himself, — "I call upon my children, who are yet on the threshold of life, to relinquish; and shall I, on the verge of leaving it, not know how to resign? The Almighty directs for his own."

Augustus, Frederick, Magnus, all broke their seals, and all presented vacancy. Every anxious eye was now turned on the two youngest boys; and the father's election between them being already made in his mind, with a fervent inward prayer, he watched the breaking of the first seal.

"It is mine!" cried George, and with a strange overwhelming of soul, at the awful responsibility that lot seemed to lay upon him, he threw himself before his father.

"Bless thee, my son!" returned he, stretching his arms over him; "may thy progeny, to the latest generations, emulate these thy brothers! Every grey head of thy race will then, like thy fa-

thers, go down in peace, in honour to the grave!"

George wept in silence where he knelt; and solemn was the surrounding stillness, while the dying parent extended his benedictions to his several sons, repeating them separately over each bent-down head. The bright locks of youth were luxuriant in all. But policy had now marked a tonsure there; and a chill, colder than the already grasping fingers of death, touched the parental bosom with regret at so hard a necessity. He then took the blank scroll of Christian, and superscribed it. "The writing is hardly legible," said he; "but the heart of my son will decypher it."

His hand fell on the sheet, and his eyes closed for a moment. Luitgard, who stood near him, touched that now icy hand. "My master!" cried he, "there is yet a duty to perform!"

The duke started from his pillow.

"You have settled with the temporal world," continued the minister of Heaven; "the cup of eternal life is now before you!" He held the sacred bread and chalice to him. "Take it now with your children. And when next you meet, it will be at the footstool of Him, who, consummating all sacrifice in Himself; commanded this blest communion, in perpetual evidence of His love and your redemption."

The parting soul seemed hovering on the lips, which then bowed to the cup. But still present in affection with all on earth that was dear to him, before his last sigh breathed that soul to its God, he had shared the holy rite with his sons.

CHAP. X.

NEXT morning all was still in the castle. — Not a sound was heard by those who glided silently along the passages on indispensible duties, excepting now and then the low sobs of a mourner, whose door was closed against the intrusion of common sympathy.

A week, indeed, passed in this awful suspension from the usual business of life. — But it was not to within the castle alone, that such estrangement between the different members of the same household was confined; every where in the town, employment seemed forsaken of its object, and rest failed of producing repose. — Sadness sat on every countenance, and a cold sense of deprivation lay in the bottom of every heart.

At last the day arrived when the closed

gates of the castle were re-opened, for the solemnity to come forth, that was to consign the father of his people to the tomb. — All his children were to meet, or follow it; at least all who could reach the spot in time; for the whole of the citizens of Celle, with crowds from other districts of the dukedom, cloathed in black, and sorrow of a deeper hue, tracked the streets, and the roads to the town. Every voice was mute, while the sable cavalcade passed along; no sounds were heard, save the dull tramp of the plumed horses, and the low monotonous rolling of the mourner's carriage-wheels over the causeway, laid with saw-dust. — Banners waved before the hearse, but bent towards the earth, to which he who had won them, was then returning to his last bed. — The armorial blazonry of the heroes whose examples he had followed, hung in numerous escutcheons, under the long sweeping canopy of the bier. — Yet no eye saw any thing in this gorgeous

pageant, but the vehicle which carried their beloved sovereign to the tomb.— No remark, or even lamentation, disturbed the awful attention; while to the rest of the funeral sounds were added the deep-toned tolling of the bell, pausing, and resuming, at the intervals of a minute from the time of the hearse appearing from the castle gate-way, until it drew near the great door of the church. But when the head of the duke's coffin was perceived from under the dark draperies of the pall, in being drawn forth to be conveyed into the church, an universal wail broke from the assembled people. — The bearers, and their sacred charge, entered beneath the porch, where the bishop, with his consecrated brethren, received it. — The six sons of the deceased, habited in long black robes, mourners indeed, followed with the ministers of state.— All of the citizens who could, pressed in after them; and when there was no more room, those who re-

mained without, gave way to their groans and tears.

The organ pealed during the passage of the body into the choir. — There was then a long silence — at least it seemed so to those whom the shut doors excluded, and therefore could not hear the service as it proceeded; but at last a faint and single cry was heard. — A momentary tumult of many voices succeeded, with a short bustle within; a pause then ensued for a few minutes, followed by a low murmur, like a general burst of half-suppressed grief. — All was indeed over. And the doors re-opening, the procession came forth, not in the order it entered, but crowding forward, round the mourning princes. George lying in the arms of two of them, who, with faces blanched as marble, assisted their attendants in bearing him into the air.

At that most awful passage of the service, when the dust was thrown upon his father's coffin, he had uttered a

piercing cry, and fallen insensible into the grave. — None who ever beheld that sacred rite, and heard those words over a beloved object, can have escaped the pang which then struck to the heart of the son. — In almost every other passage of the service, the promises of immortality, from Him who became *the first fruits of them that sleep*, console and cheer the mourner. — But at this solemn commitment to the ground, death appears in all its threatened final extinction; in "earth to earth," we see the tremendous sentence denounced on all who live, verified upon what we love best! — Then the heart pays the penalty of offending man; it feels the sting of death, not for itself, but in what it loves; and, with prostration of soul, acknowledges, that but for the mercy of God, who has assured us of *the resurrection of the dead!* we should mourn without hope; and could only seek consolation, in joining that clay cold sleep; in giving our hearts

to be shared by the worm, ready to prey on all that was most dear to us!

Such, indeed, had been the impression of the falling dust, on the mind of George, when the cry he uttered pierced through the walls of the church, to the ears of the assembled multitude; a sound from within, which struck at once on every bosom without; for all felt it had issued from some one of their common father's own children.

Their aspect in emerging from the porch, shewed how just had been the conclusion. — The faces of the princes, no longer shrouded from view by their mourning hoods, now thrown back in the anxious disorder of attention to their brother, appeared with every trace of manly sorrow. The young John was weeping aloud, and led out by Everstein. — Ernest, (whose accession to the sole government of the dukedom had been proclaimed from that very church door, on the morning of the dissolution of the

duke,) he now forgot the forms of his new dignity, in fraternal anxiety; and with a countenance peculiarly pale, and his eyes bent on his brother alone, whom he supported on one arm, he took no notice of the crowd, now pressing near him. They had listened to the proclamation of his accession, in regretful silence: but the sight of this scene of domestic sorrow, attracted every heart towards their young duke. — Some put the train of his mourning robe to their lips; others, more distant, ejaculated prayers, that he might reign in peace and honour, like the prince they lamented.

The air blew very fresh; and George began to revive just as the servants were preparing to lift him into the coach, to convey him away from the melancholy scene. — A full recollection of what had passed, and a quick conception that all was completed during his insensibility, flushed into his mind the moment he re-opened his eyes, and saw the sun, and

heard the crowd, and met the anxious looks of his brothers. He raised himself from their arms, with a sudden rallying of his strength; and throwing himself into the carriage, the door of which was open to receive him, he covered his face with his hands; and, bathed in salutary tears, though speechless as his fellow mourners, accompanied them back to their desolated home.

It was late in the evening of that day, when heavy clouds coming up from the north-west, broke into vast dark masses, sweeping over the sky; and a penetrating, biting wind blew from the sandy tracts between the Elbe and the woods of Celle; that one lonely traveller, cold from within, rather than from the season without, and with dishevelled garments, rode across the Aller bridge into the town. His horse was in a foam, though he slackened its pace when he approached the barrier gate. No one, however, asked him who he was, or whither he

went. He too well apprehended the cause of this utter neglect of the customary wardship there; yet hoping to reach the castle before the last solemnity, he did not venture hazarding the extinction of that ray of comfort, by making any enquiry of the few melancholy beings whom he saw, like silent spectres in their mourning weeds, flitting by the ends of the streets, as he mutely traversed them. — But when he came in sight of the main tower of the castle, and saw the lowered flag flapping against the battlements, he then felt he beheld the fact he before had only heard of! — The lord of that castle was indeed no more! Dimness passed over his eyes, and the pulse of his heart seemed to collapse, while he still went forward; By the instinct of habit he threw himself off his horse at a small postern in the first quadrangle, through which a private way led immediately to the ducal apartments; and thence, without stoppage of any

kind, not being met by even a servant, he proceeded to the room, which he well remembered to have been usually inhabited by him he sought.

Ernest, who had always preferred this part of the palace on account of its command of view, on assuming the cares of government, reserved it for his hours of seclusion; and to it he retired on the evening of his father's obsequies, to compose his troubled spirit after the trying solemnities of the day. — He was leaning back in his chair, meditating on the scene which had just closed, when the sound of a quick step in the gallery, and the immediate opening of his door, made him hastily look up. — So unceremonious an entrance to his presence could only be accounted for, by his supposing that the physician to whose care he had committed his brother George, was bringing him some alarming tidings. He started on his feet, on beholding a person enter, half wrapped in a cloak; but in whose

pale and agitated countenance, the next moment, he discovered his brother Christian.

After their first embrace, it was some minutes before this long absent son could master his emotions sufficiently, to ask whether he were yet too late for the last duties to his father. When he did speak, his eyes were fixed on the deep black garments of his brother. — His own bore the marks of many a rough field.

"This morning," returned Ernest, "we all followed him to the grave."

"All! How, in every way am I bereaved!" groaned the full heart of his questioner; and putting a handkerchief to his overflowing eyes, he walked to a window, where he remained for some time in a sincere mourner's silence. — At last he turned to his brother, and in a calmed tone, made some enquiries respecting the time and progress of their father's illness; and whether his only

absent son had been remembered in his dying blessing.

Ernest, with that saddened composure, which bespeaks a longer acquaintance with the sorrow they both shared, now recounted the several circumstances which preceded, and attended the duke's testamentary hours. — Christian listened with rivetted attention, from the beginning to the end. Now he did not weep, neither did he sigh. He was called upon to act, as well as to suffer. He received a command from the parent he lamented, to do more than subdue his grief. He was to be the sword and the staff of his brother, his soldier and his friend; "and in obeying thee, my father!" said he, inwardly, "I still serve thee."

Such were the thoughts, fraught with consolation, that passed through the mind of Christian, during the recital which the young duke made of the last days of their venerated parent; describing the unwearied attention with which he pro-

vided for all who depended on him, whether by public care or private benevolence; also the pious equanimity with which he prepared for his own eternal change; and the unimpaired paternal affection, with which he partook of the last act of his faith, with his assembled children.

Christian's heart did indeed yearn to have shared that hour. But as the narrative proceeded, subjects were unfolded which, taking him by surprise, powerfully wrenched his thoughts from this tenderer meditation. That the deceased duke had seen the great consequences of preserving his dominions in one integral form, and therefore bequeathed them to one hand alone, was so far from presenting a matter of regret to this his second son, (to whom, according to common usage, considerable territory ought to have devolved), a flash even of gladness lit up his eye, while declaring his perfect satisfaction in so wise a disposition. But

when Ernest mentioned the more secret article, to guarantee the continuance of this single heirship, then Christian found a demand on his duty hard to obey; it was one to take from him all.

Ernest spoke of it almost with indifference. His soul had never felt a touch of what then pressed upon his brother's. Unimpassioned by nature, and devoted to the enjoyments of taste rather than of the affections, he loved those around him more from habit, and the amenities of a gentle temper, than any sensibility to those persons being really essential to his happiness. Hence his brief attachment to the beautiful coquet, who had relinquished him for a higher ambition, having been awakened by a belief that she first loved him; when her true aim was discovered by her falseness, his pride bled more than his heart; and without a struggle, he took the vow, which now seized the soul of Christian, with all the

horror of an utter devastation of his every hope.

Different, indeed, was his temperament from that of his brother. Ardent, devoted, tender, every connection in life affected him intimately. The filial reverence in which he had held his father was profound; the fraternal affection with which he regarded his brothers was fond and cherishing; while his devotedness to the public or private interests, to which his principles attached him, absorbed all that remained of self within him. This latter principle had always been the rallying point of his character to himself. Now it was to be put to a test he never could have anticipated! And could he resign all that was most precious to his heart as a man, for the public interests now proposed to him as a prince? Dedicated by his father's earliest precepts, and more powerful example, to the spirit of patriotism; and though from youth to

manhood a worshipper of its glories, still from his very boyhood he had retained one secret chamber in his soul for a more endearing guest; to be, what he had seen his mother to his father, a solace, a soother from the great battle of life. Knowing himself the most cherished object of a heart as tender as it was pure, to love Adelheid, the long accustomed companion of his youth, was to love virtue, for she inspired it; though amidst approving smiles, she often wept the way it led, and once she said to him, "I tremble at what you are—whither your nature impels you! Yet I would not have you otherwise. Nor could I bear that you should be weak, in the weakness of my heart's dread at where you go!"

In the anguish of their last parting, she had almost unconsciously uttered this distracted, yet intelligible avowal of herself; feeling a terrible foreboding, while he hung on her hand and placed his betroth-

ing ring upon it, that they should never meet again. Fields of blood were then before her eyes; France and its enfuriated, treacherous leaguers; the sword and the dagger! And though the cause was just, she shrunk in the hour of sacrifice. Still, however, her voice would seem to declare otherwise, while she said, "Farewell! My prayers shall follow you."

But how, when those words were uttered, did he leave her. Cast, weeping on the cold sod, where they had kneeling breathed their last adieu! So he thought; but the face then hid in the veil which enfolded her, could he have seen it, was pale and insensible as the cold statues near which she lay.

Christian, on hearing the vow demanded of him by his father, felt all these pangs of separation revive; and with the more poignant conviction, that they were bliss to what he was now summoned to inflict upon her and himself. She had

loved him from her infancy; and when she knew her orphan state, without relatives, without friends, but those she had found under his paternal roof, she looked to him alone to be all to her: yes, he felt her soul cling to him, with a sweet dependency, a sense of mingled existence, which death only could sever! This he was called upon to dissolve with a stroke; while himself, in that severer than dying sacrifice, would relinquish what had ever been the haven of his life! Whether from the field of slaughter, or the bed of anguished wounds, on the heights of victory, or in the depths of disappointment, — nay, in sorrow's self, — still the idea of Adelheid hovered like a blessed spirit near him; her image appeared at the end of every darkened vista, *full of light, and splendour, and joy!* But all was now to be withdrawn. As if he had inherited the malediction of Cain, — the gates of peace were to be closed against him; he was to become an adventurer, without a home;

a wanderer, without a bosom of refuge! He was even to break the heart, that to his would have been faithful, even in partaking all these trials! "And for myself," ejaculated he, inwardly, "having destroyed thee, Adelheid, I go down to my grave, unregretted — unremembered!"

He started from his chair. — "Oh! any thing but this, my father!" cried he, aloud. "I cannot do this!"

"You are certainly at liberty to refuse," rejoined the young duke, "being absent when such a pledge was called for, and no way sanctioning such a vicarial engagement for you; if you have now any reluctance to make it yourself, (which we had not), none of us can deem you blameable in objecting to this, or indeed to any other clause in the testament of our father."

Christian, who was traversing the room in a confusion of mind and emotions he had never known before, glanced on the

little scroll, which Ernest, while speaking, had taken up from the open desk where it lay. He recognised his name, written in his father's hand, on the superscription, and stepping towards his brother, took it from him. "Leave me, Ernest," said he, "Allow me the privacy of this apartment for a short time; and when we meet again, a higher power may have settled the rebellion here. At present, I do not know myself?" While he spoke, he cast himself into a chair, and dropped his head on the table on his hands.

Ernest, in no inconsiderable surprise, both at the hesitation and extraordinary agitation of his brother, and on a subject which had cost himself and the others hardly a second thought,—with some feeling, perhaps, of at last having found a point of superiority over that brother of his father's constant boast,—with a gentle increase of conscious dignity, uttered a word of soothing, and withdrew.

Christian was then alone. Ah, no!

his torturers were round him; and instead of being able to master the strange tumult within him, — strange, because, for the first time in his existence he started from performing a demanded duty, — he found every dear and persuasive argument in redoubled array against the hardness of the task. Was it justice to himself, was it honourable to her, who had trusted in him? He who had never before measured the relative value of his actions, now seemed to have the weighing of their merits forced upon him. They had been made of no account; and this fatal vow was to defraud him even of himself! His brothers, indeed, had taken it. But passing their youthful years in the pursuits of study, or the pleasures of their paternal country, to relinquish one source of happiness out of so many, seemed scarcely a regret to them. But with him the case was different. He had been hazarding his life to keep war from their doors, by engaging on the side

of suffering humanity, at a distance from his home. He had been devoted from his earliest youth to the severest toils, in learning this lesson for his country; and through all, he had reserved only one single recompense peculiarly his own, to be his invoked reward: and he was called to devote that also! The answer was like Jephthah's to the victim of his rash vow, and he felt the immolation impossible.

"No, my father," cried he, "nor would you, had you known the heart of your son, have bequeathed that curse upon him!" He felt the demand would be one, whichever way he should decide. To disobey, was to entail it sevenfold. The curse, indeed, at that moment, seemed in his veins. No tears now flowed to his relief; and, with a pulsation in his brain, as if it were breaking into madness, he threw himself suddenly on his knees.

"My God, give me strength in this!"

cried he, "or" — he dared not complete the prayer. Cowardice, if not impiety, were in the wish it would have asked; and his soul, habituated to front every threatening circumstance, rose against seeking death as a desertion of his post. Rallied by this brave instinct of his nature, (and what is instinct but a guiding helm from Heaven!) he resolved to face at once the whole of the task assigned him, by reading the scroll, which he yet grasped unread in his hand. On looking at the superscription again, where the first sight of his name, in his father's writing, had caused him so much emotion, he found these awful and imperative words: —

"This scroll, blank within, consigns my beloved son, Christian, to a life of service and a life of celibacy."

Beneath, in the cypher character, or short-hand, in which the deceased usually wrote his state papers, was added: —

"This hard duty required of my son,

is necessary for two reasons. First, the conservation of his paternal country demands, that it should remain one state under one master. Secondly, for the perpetuity of such a settlement, the line of descent must be made single. Hence his five brothers have severally taken a vow to this effect, in deference to the lot assigned by Providence to their brother George. But Christian, my second son, not having had it in his power to be present, I, William of Celle, Duke of Brunswick Luneburg, his father, — in these my dying moments, take an oath to the same double import, on the part of that dear and absent son; promising in his name, that on his return from fighting the battles of Christendom, he will here fulfil his duty as a son, a patriot, and a christian, by solemnly ratifying this my vow: and in firm faith of such a sacrifice, I bequeath him my blessing."

At the beginning of the scroll, the characters were traced with a feeble

hand; the last sentence was perfectly steady. Christian's eyes fastened themselves there. But it was not the writing only he now saw: the vision where it was written rose before him; the whole scene in which that sentence had been penned. He beheld his father's heroic countenance, without a ruffle of doubt on his brow, even in the pangs of death, thus lingering as it were upon the verge of eternity, to become the surety of his absent son; pledging himself confidently, before God and man, that Christian would fulfil his bond. And why? *Because it was his duty to do so.*

"Then," cried he, rising from his knees, in which position he had read his father's injunction, "it no longer remains for choice. My father — my country — ye shall be satisfied!"

Having pronounced these words, he was astonished at the calm he found in himself. The resolution taken, the tumults in his breast subsided; but still a

trembling remained, — an apprehension, that nothing was surely done towards the sacrifice till it was made, and therefore irretrievable. Yet he would not disgrace the act he meant to do from principle, by performing it with the haste of desperation.

"For thee, my Adelheid!" exclaimed he, "oh, now no longer mine!" The faintness of a last separation came over him, while he added, "Heaven must comfort thee!"

The vision, indeed, rose before him, of her long hereafter hours of hopeless loneliness, weeping the absence of him who never must return; and he then felt the overwhelming power of tenderness, — that passion of the soul, which some men call a proof of its weakness. Tears, indeed, burst from his own eyes. But if such be its character, how does that weakness trample on difficulties and dangers for the object of its interest? How does it often embrace even death itself,

rather than suffer evil to the being of its affections? Christian could meditate the resignation of rank, power, every personal enjoyment from the world, and without a sigh resign them. But when he thought of her, whose confiding sympathy had been the charm of his life, and who counted on his, as *the be all, and the end all* of her's! he found the idea unman him again; and so strong was the tenderness which then subdued him, he felt he must wrest his mind, if possible, from her image, — until the utterance of the vow, duty exacted, should sanctify his tears.

CHAP. XI.

After a few moments given to the recovery of self-possession, Christian sought the duke, according to promise, in the usual assembling room of the family. He found him there with his brothers; and the interview rather increased than lessened his sense of desolation. They were all in deep black,—pale, silent, and even formal, from the restraint each put upon his individual feelings. The embrace he received from each, was, therefore, colder than the hearts which gave it, and it chilled him. He sat down, gazed once on the group; and then for a moment passed his hand over his eyes, while the comparison, with the memory of the last scene he had beheld there, flitted before them. The revered form was now indeed gone, who then appeared

from the midst of these young men, all smiles like themselves, and extending his arms eagerly to clasp his returning son. At that time George was present also; laughing through his glistening eyes at the thronging group, then clamouring around their brother with all the affectionate curiosity of their affinity and different ages, as he dealt out amongst them a variety of rarities given to him by the Queen of Navarre. George was now absent likewise. The violence of his emotions in the morning had been succeeded by feverish symptoms; and the physicians, for fear of danger from increased agitation, would not allow of his even knowing his brother was arrived.

In the course of the evening, Christian desired to see the venerable Luitgard, the preceptor of his youth; and who had performed the last religious duties to the duke.

During their conversation on the so-

lemn event, then most prominent in the minds of both, he imparted to this confidential friend some of his future plans; but not indeed the extent of his views in putting them into execution. A voice had hailed him on his melancholy journey homeward, to invite him to new fields in the east; and they were, accordingly, some of his nearest objects. But he did not now think of the results to himself, which had hitherto brightened the prospect beyond such fields. He thought of never returning.

Next morning, soon after divine service was performed in the private chapel of the castle, Christian, accompanied by Duke Ernest, and attended by all his brothers excepting the invalid, entered the council-room; where, before them and the ministers of state, he completed by his own signature, the resignation of all collateral claim to divide the territory of the dukedom; and, when that was duly registered, then under sealed doors,

he superscribed with his hand his father's bond for his vow of celibacy, and took the oath solemnly upon his knees.

The remainder of the day he passed with Ernest, in arranging dispositions for the future security of their country from foreign injuries, political or religious. And being strenuous to convince his brother, that promptitude in carrying forward their present intended movements, was as essential to their ultimate interests, as agreeable to his wish for continued employment, he requested permission to instantly commence his career; and the young duke, averse to harassing his brother's evidently disturbed spirits, by even the opposition of a desire to detain him, easily accorded with his persuasions for a secret as well as speedy departure. But Ernest could not guess all that precipitated his brother to such immediate abandonment of his home. For he knew not the cause which made that brother wish to fly, even from him-

self; to lose memory for awhile, in the multitudinous cares to which he was hastening. Inwardly marvelling, then, at the present manner of Christian; so abrupt in his proceedings; so full of a perturbed emotion, not less different from the quiet sorrow of himself and his brothers, than from Christian's former bearing, when he revisited Celle on the death of their mother; the duke said nothing on a change so inexplicable, but calmly assisted in his arrangements for the immediate journey. He proposed a travelling carriage to await him next morning at day-break, by the Aller bank beyond the town.

"No; horses for a soldier's limbs!" answered Christian, with a grateful smile. "Those luxuries undo him."

At night he bade farewell to the young sovereign in his bed-chamber; and left, in the strong embrace with which he clasped him to his heart, his most affectionate remembrances to his brothers.

"For our George," continued he, "he will not know of my having been near him, till I am gone. But when he is told, let it be with the assurance, that only the apprehensions of his physicians, could have kept me from his bed-side at this moment."

The duke engaged to repeat, faithfully, all his messages; and returning the fraternal pressure, with a brother's warmth, they separated; Ernest, to his bed; Christian, to his chamber, but not to rest.

CHAP. XII.

THAT very night, when all else in the castle were wrapped in sleep, Christian, who had been furnished by Luitgard with a master-key of the Great Church, let himself out by a small unfrequented passage through the ramparts, to seek his way, along the solitary intervening pathways, to the place of his father's interment. Having passed the castle glacis, and entered the city, the high gabled houses, with their successive stories pending over each other, rendered the streets beneath almost totally dark. But when he reached the more open space near the sacred structure, the moon shone full upon its walls, touching with her white light the gothic spires of the tower, and the sepulchral monuments beneath them. Some standing more eminent than the

rest, over the multitude of low tombs, and the long grass of the graves, seemed to beacon the sad frequenter of such places, to the spot where his buried treasure lay. But all was still. The mourning eyes which had lately wept there, were then in their distant homes, closed in temporary rest, and the lamenting heart hushed to a brief repose.

The broad light over all, gave Christian a distinct view of this vast and now lonely depository of human mortality — the last beds of what were once beloved and honoured; and his saddened gaze wandered over the many silent heaps on each side his path, as he passed with a quickened step towards the church-porch. He carried a small lantern to be his guide through the aisles, having been aware that the opacity of the old painted windows would exclude every assisting beam from moon or star; by its help he soon found the lock in the door; and applying the huge key with both his

hands, the ponderous frame, studded with the ducal arms in heavy iron-work, slowly turned on its hinges and opened before him. He stooped to take up his lamp, and entered.

A shuddering chill shot through his veins. This was the cold chamber in which he was to seek his father! He hurried forward towards the choir, his footsteps echoing dismally from the long vaulted cloisters, and having reached it, with a trembling hand put the master-key into the brazen lock of the screen-work doors. They unfolded, and he passed in; a few paces more carried him to the entrance of the ducal cemetery. It lay at the base of the high altar, and was yet, as he had been apprised, unclosed. Some masonry within being still unfinished, all visitants to the church would be excluded, till the whole were completed.

Christian held the lantern towards the dark shadowy passage, into which he was

about to descend. At that moment something gleamed on his eyes from the right; and pointing his light to the spot, he met the pale reflection of its rays, from the highly polished marble of his grandfather Ernest the Confessor's tomb. The beam of the lantern streamed full on the uplifted face of the saintly figure, which knelt, clasping the holy Gospels; a broken sword lay at its feet.

"Venerable dead!" murmured Christian to himself. "Your combats are over! Here ye rest in peace!"

He paused in undescribable awe. For, low as he spoke, the last word echoed in shrill responses through the deep arched roofs of the aisles, till it died away; sounding, to his raised mind, like the successive whispers of a heavenly host, guarding the sleeping dead beneath. He stood still till the vocal agitation in the air ceased, and then slowly descended the steps into the vault. All was darkness. But the damp earthy smell which seems

peculiar to the grave, whether under a marble shrine or beneath the churchyard sod, would have been sufficient to tell him he had reached the last abode of mortality.

A ray from his lantern struck on the bright gilded trophies on the head of his father's coffin. It stood on a trestle in the centre of the chamber, half shrouded by a crimson pall, rich with the blazonry of the house of Celle and Luneburg. Christian paused before it. He did not consider those decorations of the dead mockery; they were registers of noble actions. And had he then thought of them at all, it would have been as memorials of the worth of his ancestors.

"So," he might have said, "*their good works follow them!*"

But no image of earth then shared his thoughts, with what was hidden from his sight under that pall, within that trophied hearse.

Every selfish passion in his breast, he

found hushed to silence. He was in the presence of his father's ashes! He was present with that last state of man, when nothing remains to him in earth or heaven, but his virtues. He was also in an especial manner, in the presence of his God, who knew his inmost thoughts; who had brought him into this world to perform a probationary duty; — not to enjoy, but to obey! "And is there not joy in obedience?" he asked himself.

"My God! — My father!" cried he, "My sin is heavy upon me. I have rebelled against thee, my Maker! — I have murmured against thy wisdom, my father! — Oh, that thou couldst now hear, and receive the full, the unreserved dedication of my heart!"

With these words, he knelt down and bent his head against the side of the coffin; then it was that the strengthened spirit, which had uttered the renewed vow with such true contrition, poured forth, in unutterable language, its

prayers to his heavenly advocate, to pardon the past, and to render him stedfast in unswerving obedience,—at the hour he then anticipated. But whatever lasting sufferings were to follow his final parting with her who was to share the sacrifice, he implored they might fall on him alone.

"Then," murmured he, "the bitterness of this living death will be past!"

Rising with a strange composure, as if some heavenly ministry had indeed breathed peace over the lately troubled sea within him; the exalted state into which devotion had wrought his mind, made him at that moment really feel so unshackled from every sublunary wish, that he believed his whole happiness in future would be found in the simple satisfaction of fulfilled obedience.

But "he who thinks he stands, must take heed lest he fall!"—Nature still lay at the bottom of Christian's soul, to make him sensible, and at no distant

period, of its fondest yearnings towards the objects he had foresworn. Indeed, what heart ever dared a sacrifice of its affections, that did not endure after pains of even piercing agony? That did not find dreary hours of hopeless joylessness? And often count life a desert, till it discerned the gate of paradise at its end! But that such a moment of pure spiritual existence, as this which now visited the soul of Christian, is ever permitted to be tasted by probationed man; that is sufficient earnest of the divine life of immortality;—and such a glimpse of Heaven may well beacon the struggling mariner of earth, through winds and waves, to his haven and his home. As it was, having thus repeated the ratification of the vow his father had pledged for him, in pronouncing it by the side of his sacred remains, he felt as if it were indeed hallowed by his presence; and the act seemed a sort of link, still connecting him with the honoured being, now for a

time separated from him by the awful gulph of eternity.

Christian took up his lamp; and raising the pall from off the breast of the coffin, stedfastly regarded the ducal insignia that embossed its surface. The inscription contained the titles of the deceased, with a few additional lines, simply stating the date of his birth, the day of his death, and the number of his children. At sight of his own name in the latter register, the tears then brimming to his eyes overflowed; and sinking on the bosom of his father, with all a son's dear recollections, he sobbed aloud, while his lips kissed the cold gilding — now the only chronicle of all the worth that slept beneath.

But Christian did not weep there alone. He heard his grief re-echoed; and not by the awful mockery of the vaulted passages around. A young and tender voice was murmuring his name in those sobs; and in the next instant he felt himself

encircled by trembling, yet clinging, arms.

"Who has broken upon me thus?" demanded the prince, though in a tone of kindness; for a sorrow which so responded his own, disarmed the displeasure with which the first shock of finding an intruder had made him start from his sad position.

"Pardon me! Oh, pardon me!" faultered a hardly articulate voice. "It is George!—I could not bear you should leave Celle, and I not see you!"

Christian strained his brother to his heart. It then swelled almost to bursting; for till this moment, he had met no sympathy like his own. The act which brought the fevered boy there, proved, indeed, they were of one nature; and, alas! equally impetuous in its demonstrations! Christian had begun to place the curb on his; George was yet to learn the necessity for such a rein. Both sat

down together on the steps of the vault, folded in each other's arms, and weeping in silence. At last the elder brother spoke; gently enquiring of the young prince how he had been permitted to follow him at such an hour, through so cold a night, to such a distance, and to such a place? "Besides," added he, for emotion still chained the tongue of George; "none knew I came hither, excepting Luitgard; and he would hardly consent to a hazard like this!"

"No," was the broken reply; "no one is answerable for what I have done but myself." Then pausing a little to collect himself, in the intervals of more agitating subjects, Christian gathered from him the following particulars.

From an accidental mentioning of his brother's name, in the course of the day by his attendants, and the air of mystery amongst them with which they checked his enquiries, George had taken alarm; and afterwards questioning his brothers,

their replies being even more vague and contradictory than the servants, he could not but fear some new subject of mourning hung over him. Wrought up to agony, he managed to detain his youngest brother in the room after the others had withdrawn; and from the good-natured boy, his persuasions soon won the whole truth, though under a charge of secrecy. George being then relieved of his greatest dread — evil having befallen the absent Christian — felt the fever, which a moment before had been raging in his veins with all the fury of mental irritation, gradually subside under the genial influence of calmed anxiety. Indeed the joy of his fraternal transport, for a time obliterated the sense of sorrow at his heart; and he resolved to steal that night to his brother's chamber, and there give him his first embrace after so long an absence, in all the luxury of a meeting unchecked by the observance of others.

Therefore, when all were gone to rest, and his attendants fast asleep in the anti-room, he rose with as little commotion as possible, and covering himself hastily with a few slight garments, stole out of the apartment, without disturbing any body. He did not venture to bring his lamp; but on issuing from the door, saw a light gleaming from the end of the long gallery. Starting back, from fear of being discerned, and so prevented in his object, he waited till the person who carried it presented himself from the cross passage whence it shone; and then he beheld the figure of the beloved brother he was seeking. By the style of his dress, George said, with surprise he saw him prepared for travelling; and from the caution of his movements, suspected he was even then leaving the castle. Struck with a panic of yet losing him without a word, he ejaculated his name; but agitation withheld the sound from being audible, and Christian proceeded on his

way. His step seemed hasty, and apprehensive as that of his anxious pursuer; who, with a beating heart, hurried after him, but having put on a pair of light slippers, his footsteps made no noise; neither, indeed, was his voice heard a second time, when, on observing his brother open the postern at the bottom of the stairs, he again essayed to pronounce his name. Like a man under the influence of night-mare, the eager boy felt his powers of audible speech locked within him; and finding himself still unheeded, for Christian had not once glanced behind him, he almost threw himself from the stairs, in fear of losing him entirely. But when he reached the bottom, Christian had not only passed through the postern, but was half-way over the wooden bridge, which crossed the moat in that quarter. George did not hesitate to follow, though the keen wind of the night, colder from the water below, blew chilly over his slightly co-

vered frame. His heart, warm with its object, felt no other inconvenience from the circumstance, than an apprehension that should his brother discover him now, he would not suffer him to proceed; and so he might at once be deprived of the long interview he yet hoped to enjoy.

George's lately elevated spirits sunk, at another conviction. They had indeed been raised even to a sense of happiness; for the presence alone of an object beloved, gives a spring to the mind, which hardly any thing else than the pang of separation can totally take away. But these spirits, in the young son of the deceased duke, fell at once on observing the direction his brother took; giving place to the saddest recollection of all his grief had endured there, while with an awed haste he continued his pursuit.

He followed Christian into the church; but did not venture immediately to descend into the vault. He knelt by its

entrance — not to listen ; yet while his own sorrow flowed without, he heard his brother's half-breathed plaints over their father's bier. — Still, however, he felt the dread of intrusion ; but when the sobs of that brave heart burst forth, George could refrain no longer. — His soul sprung towards him ; his agitated frame obeyed the impulse, and in the next moment he had the mournful joy of being clasped in his brother's arms.

" Ah !" cried George, as he concluded his little narrative, " Ernest meant to spare me. — But I think I should have died, had you gone away, and I not held you thus ! — had you gone, and not known me as I am ! — determined," added he, in a firmer voice, " if I live, to follow you ! — "

Few were the words which now passed between them, to make their souls as well understood by each other, as if they had been together without separation. — Christian also heard the name of his own

kindred spirit, with whom George had spoken; and found in the youthful bosom of his brother, all the restrainless ardour of his own at the same age, when every battle was a tournament, and every tournament a victory. — George at last urged to be taken with him; alleging, that he must recover sooner in the scenes he was so eager to join, and by the side of persons it would be his glory to emulate, " than if left to brood over the past, and see only memorials of —" His voice failed; and Christian saw where he then looked. Both brothers rose, and moved in that direction. The elder laid his hand, with the younger's clasped in it, on the breast-plate of the coffin.

" Here," said he, " on this sacred altar, I pledge you my word, that when I am satisfied the Emperor's good faith to our brethren of Germany, will really allow us to spare our swords for him across the Danube; and when we have once fairly measured strength with our

infidel enemy there, I promise to send a trusty friend to bring you to me. — Meanwhile, for the sake of him, were he now alive, whose remains sleep here — he whose revered face, now hid from us, we shall yet behold again, when the last trumpet sounds!" — Christian gazed on the half raised pall as he spoke — "For his sake, my brother, rest awhile at home; to cheer with your once gay smiles — and they must revive again — our dear Ernest! — Unaccustomed yet to the cares of government, he will need your love, as well as duty."

George did not reply. — His heart was too full; but bending his face upon the fraternal hand which lay on the coffin, he gave it that fervent kiss which he meant should convey his assent to the injunction of a brother, to whom obedience would hereafter be the passion of his life. — But the chill of the inscription-plate struck through his lips to his soul; and like the effect of the *falling dust*,

upon the same spot, that very morning, he started back with a gasp of failing respiration.— Christian, who, by the faint light of his lamp, saw the change in the face of his brother, caught him in his arms just as his quivering eye-lids closed; then, giving one last look to the sacred deposit he left, he bore his helpless charge from the sepulchre of their father.

When the invalid boy was sufficiently recovered to attempt returning to the castle, they quitted the church. — The extraordinary exertion he had made to come, and the consequent exaltation of his various feelings, by this time had so exhausted him, that though all in his heart was the same as when he entered the holy place, when he rose to leave it, he had hardly strength to move, and none to speak. —Tears, and the half-suppressed sighs of a weakness he vainly tried to conceal, were all his language. — But Christian, who understood it well, by not observing these signs of what was

passing within, allowed them freer relief; and ere he had supported George by the assistance of his sustaining arm to the entrance of the bridge, he found him walk firmly. — They passed it; and at the gate of the little postern of the castle, the object of his anxiety was able, even in a cheerful voice, to ask a renewal of his brother's promise. — He tried to smile; for, young and brave, he thought himself lowered to effeminacy by the sensibility he had shown.

"Dearest Christian," murmured he, "I am not feeble in spirit, though you have seen me thus. And even when this fever makes me weak, while I am near your heart, I seem to need no other strengthening!"

Christian was not now to learn that the most determined courage dwells in the tenderest bosoms. And when his brother uttered this, he was straining him to the brave heart that loved him as his own soul; but the last words electrified

him with a different memory; one that tore up all his own sensibilities, and clasping George again to his breast with an agonized fervour — "Farewell!" cried he, "you are now this country's hope! — Cherish your health — live to be honoured and happy!"

"Then it must be with you, Christian!" rejoined the young prince; and in a tumult of feelings the brothers separated.

George re-entered the castle just as the dawn broke. Christian re-crossed the bridge, he knew not how; for the very words his brother used in parting, had been uttered by his betrothed Adelheid when she bade him farewell! and his reply had been, "My heart shall be thy support as long as it has life within it!" Now, how was he going to rend away that support?

He shuddered when he came in view of his servants, and the horses that were to convey him to her presence; the well-

known faces, which had always smiled with answering honest sympathy to his, whenever he turned his faithful roan's head, on his accustomed path to Helmstadt! But then, he went to impart the joy he was to receive. How could he now enter that house? How could he look up to that face, which had hitherto been the load-star of all his journeyings? He now felt as if nothing had yet been done in the fearful sacrifice assigned him. The first part had only been the immolation of himself; the last stroke was to be on her; and he was to inflict it!

CHAP. XIII.

A cold drizzle, and sleet, shrouded every object of the surrounding country, as Christian rode over the rustic champaign which bordered the thick woody suburbs of the secularized abbey of Helmstadt. The nuns, to whom the reformed faith gave freedom half a century ago, had long been replaced by the widows of brave men slain in the contests of Christendom; and over this asylum the venerable Baroness Osterode presided, who for some years had been the protectress of Adelheid.

The quarter of the old structure where she and her charge resided, stood in some measure distinct from the rest: a chapel, and a small neat flower-garden, formerly part of the convent cemetery, dividing the abbess-court, as it continued

to be called, from the cloisters; which contained the cells appropriated to the widowed sisterhood. They were hidden from the sight of any visitants approaching through the great avenue from Celle, by a hornbean hedge, high and opake as an embattled wall, into the form of which, indeed, it was cut; while the gothic pinnacles of the dwelling-house of the abbess, and the towers of the adjacent chapel, presented canopies of thick ivy, so luxuriant in its growth as to hang down in long green and berried streamers, festooning themselves over the pointed windows, or mingling with the jessamine, clematis, and other flowering shrubs, which tapestried the buttressed walls in the lower stories of the building. Here the shower, which had stopped for awhile, yet shewed itself in large drops from the leaves, as if every familiar object around him wept the purpose of his present arrival.

He threw himself from his horse. He passed under the porch, and was met in

the entrance-hall by the Baroness Osterode. So unusual a ceremony might have surprised him; but he thought only of her to whom he came. The countenance of her venerable protectress was more in trouble than in sorrow, though her black dress shewed that the tranquil dwelling of Helmstadt also shared, with the rest of the country, the general mourning for their common benefactor. "Prince," said she, "I saw your approach from my window, and I hasten to break — to share the pain of a sad greeting."

Christian, hardly aware of her words, mechanically took the hand she presented to him. Holding it close, she gently turned him from the direction in which he was moving, and led him into her own parlour. He looked around.

"Where is Lady Adelheid?" he asked.

"In her own apartment," returned the baroness, her own voice in some measure echoing the distressful tone of

his, which she naturally attributed to his paternal loss. "The suddenness of our deprivation at Celle," continued she, "was such a shock, that in her weak state we fear ——" and her protectress paused.

"Fear what?" cried Christian, electrified by the word, but more by the manner of its utterance. "Surely my Adelheid is well?" His manner shewed that he dared not hope the reply his demand seemed to anticipate.

"I would I could say so!" answered the venerable woman, incapable for the moment of adding more.

"Mysterious Providence!" cried the prince, as he staggered back; and dropping into a seat, concealed his agitated face with his hands, while his whole frame was shaken with the most portentous emotions.

During that time, his informant explained the sad history of her first intimation, by telling him, that about a month

ago a packet arrived from himself to the Lady Adelheid. It was delivered to her by a wood-cutter, who told her, it had been confided to him by the person who brought it, to put it into no other hands than her's; for that the messenger, who was an old soldier of Prince Christian's, had been thrown from his horse into a dell of the wood, where the deliverer of the letter found him. The peasant described him as in an almost expiring state, but that he would not allow of any assistance being brought to himself, till he had dispatched, by this immediate opportunity, the packet entrusted by his master.

It is almost needless to say, that Adelheid did not even break the seal of her letter, until she had collected the proper assistance from the hospital part of the abbey, and hastened with them herself, conducted by the woodmen, to the spot where the faithful messenger of her

Christian lay. Her own hands raised the head of the fainting veteran from the ground, and bathed his temples with an essence she had brought in her bosom. The surgical persons then examined his hurts; and having found them more likely to be tedious in cure than dangerous in consequence; while they were binding up a fractured limb, and washing the bruises of his body with a salutary unction, (necessary preparatives to removing him on a bier to the abbey), she sat down on the root of a tree near the spot, but out of sight, and then broke the seal of her treasure.

It told, how near Henry of Navarre drew to the goal of all his victories. It told, how near Christian drew towards the point of all his vows. A throne for the one victor; a beloved bride for the other. A few weeks more, and he would be on the road from Henry's pavilion in the Tuileries of Paris, to the little cell at

Helmstadt, where all that was most precious to him on earth was preserved and enshrined!

When Christian recollected what a promise that letter contained, he groaned aloud. The baroness was ignorant it imported more than a kinsman's affection; to which she attributed all the new anguish he shewed, as she proceeded to relate how Adelheid, absorbed in its contents, neither remarked the departure of the group to the abbey, nor was sensible to the sudden fall of a heavy shower of rain, till she was wet through, and a shoot of cold through her whole frame was its first intimation. Heated in her run to the spot, she had become more susceptible to the chill she had received; and drawing her wetted garments round her, hurried homewards through the pouring deluge. She was met by servants seeking her with cloaks, but too late to guard her against the mischief; and pale and shivering, she entered the parlour of the

abbey. An inflammation on the lungs was the immediate consequence. The progress it made in the course of two weeks, — consuming that lovely form, from the fullness of the most perfect beauty, to the mere shadow of what it was, — seemed hardly credible.

"It must be seen," observed the baroness, "to be believed. And when the dear child heard of the duke's extremity, and that you, prince, were sent for to close his eyes, the grief she was in — for she said her eyes would be to close also! — burst a blood vessel in her lungs, and for some hours I believed she was never to see the light of another day."

"And where is she?" demanded Christian again, starting from his chair, and looking wildly around him. "May I not see her?"

"Surely, my prince," was the reply. "But she must be apprised of your arrival. The sudden sight of you ——"

"Well," returned Christian, "do what

is right! But, for mercy's sake, let me see her before my heart gives way!"

The weight of the world seemed to him then pressing on it; and the bodily agony of that oppression, or distension, felt a sure warning that the next addition to his load of mental suffering, must break its cords.

The baroness re-entered. Tears were on her cheek; and not trusting her voice with words, she motioned Christian to follow her. With a spring he obeyed, so powerful is the habit of the soul. But he faltered in his step, when he drew near the door of the room he had so often entered in the most blissful converse with her he best loved. Yet that she was still to be found there, and not confined either to her bed or her chamber, shot a transitory gleam of comfort to his bosom. She might still live, though not for him.

He put the baroness gently back with his hand, as she was laying her's upon the latchet of the door.

"I must see her alone!"

There was no resisting the anguished command in that voice; and the venerable lady respecting it in him, who had ever been as the dearest of brothers to her charge, immediately withdrew; but as she moved away, she could not forbear whispering, "Be not overcome by the condition in which you may find her!"

Christian softly raised the latchet, and opened the door. A large folding-screen spread between him and the object of his agony. He advanced to the turn of its leaf, and then beheld her. She sat in a large chair, with a small table before her. Her ever graceful figure was wrapped in a long white garment, reaching from her slender throat, now hardly distinguishable from it in colour, to her feet and hands; and there it was fastened round her wrists with a pair of gold bracelets, he had brought her from the Hartz. A black fillet bound back her

long and glossy hair, a few escaped ringlets of which still played over her throbbing temples; while a crape veil of the same sad hue, (the most visible badge of mourning for her honoured benefactor, gone to the world whither she was hastening!) hung partially over her face and neck, to protect them from the numerous flies that were buzzing in her chamber.

The profile of that matchless face, rather bent down to her breast, was towards him when he entered. It was of an ashy paleness; and the features, having lost all their roundness, exhibited indeed the outline of what once was perfect beauty; but now he looked on it, and needed not be told that the hand of the spoiler Death was there. Grief, at its acmé, was in his bosom—but it did not kill.

He made a step forward from the screen. She did not appear sensible to any approach. He advanced close to her, and still she did not even turn her head.

"I was warned not to be overcome by the condition in which I might find her!" exclaimed he, within himself. "Good God! what does this mean?" And with an inward horror, to which he could give no name, he bent upon his knee beside her, and took her hand.

At the touch, she raised her head a little and looked round. At sight of a man in that position, she started, with a wildered look in her languid eyes.

"Adelheid!" cried he, "my Adelheid! Do you not know me?" And he clung to her hand, as if he could never part from it more.

She passed her other hand over her eyes;—then fixing them one instant on his face, a flash of glowing recollection of who the baroness had indeed named to her, but at the time with the vague impression of a voice in a dream—now rushed through her awakening faculties, and with a cry of joy she fell upon his bosom. Tears of momentary bliss,—tears

of mortal anguish; or rather such as pitying angels shed over the miseries of human nature,—mingled on each other's cheeks. She thought of the summons within her, that was to tear her for ever from a breast so dear; he remembered, that even life prolonged to the beloved being he then clasped to his heart, could not restore him to her. Yet she was then his! Wedded to him in spirit; and he could not forego this rapture, granted in that agonizing hour, of holding her to his own soul for the last time, till eternity should give her to him for ever.

When Adelheid raised herself from those clinging arms, which again and again had pressed her closer, the shroud of the grave seemed to have passed from her countenance. A tender bloom spread over that transparent cheek; and the before trance-like languor of her eyes, had given place to all the soft lustre of their former sweetness. The tears which yet

swam there, rendered them still more penetratingly lovely; while the same humid witness of the feelings within, dewed the rose beneath them, and the sapphire veins which tracked the hectic snow of her face and neck. She smiled, as she wiped away the drops from her eye-lids with the end of her veil; those on her lips had been drawn from Christian's cheek, and their touch was balm.

"Christian," said she, "you are come—and in this world we shall part no more!"

For worlds he could not answer that demand; but he even sobbed over the hand he strained to his burning lips.

"Nay!" cried she, in her tenderest accents; "we must not grieve while we are yet together! And God seems to renew my life in your presence."

Christian felt, that now the sum of his greatest possible earthly happiness would be to die with her. But he dared not tell

her so; and he could only continue to bathe that beloved hand with his still silent tears. She proceeded.

"When you came into the room, my not appearing sensible to your approach, must have shocked you. The baroness had been in, and said something to me about Prince Christian; but I hardly knew what. For they give me medicines to still my pains, that bewilder me as if I were all day asleep; but I thall not need them any more. Look up, dear Christian, and see how well I am!" She softly touched his bent-down head with her tender fingers, as she spoke.

He did look up. He beheld her face as an angel's. He knelt before her on both his knees. He held both her hands in his.

"Adelheid!" cried he, "you have sacred claims on me!—In such an hour pitying Heaven will own them!—Would you have me abide with you here?—Speak to me—for I am not myself!"

There was something in his manner, more than the distress of a man who saw all he loved sinking to the grave; there was a distraction, that must have another object, — and the quick perception of love saw it.

" Christian," said she, with more solemnity, " if I did require you to abide with me here, it would not be for long. Though your looks — your kind accents — may medicine me from pain and wandering faculties, they cannot hold me in life. The shaft is sped, and entered." And laying her hand, not on her breast, but on her heart, she leaned back, again pale and gasping.

" You already think that one of those medicines is poison!" cried he, in a tone of unutterable agony, starting from his knees, and yet holding her hand while he hung over her. " My accents have sounded unkind — ungrateful — murderous to thee, my Adelheid! But the cause has first torn my own soul." He paused

in anguish of spirit; nay, almost rebellion against the sacred adjuration, that had brought him to such a moment of inexorable misery.

"I do not understand you!" replied Adelheid, in the calm tone of a despair that needed no comment,—seeing how brief would be its pains.

"Oh, Adelheid!" was his sad response, "at such a time, I would have spared us both, what indeed I did come to avow! But to find you ill—to find you thus—and then to harrow up your gentle spirit! How have I betrayed myself into such redoubling wretchedness!"

"Speak—whatever it may be!" rejoined the almost fainting sufferer. "No misery can affect me more, than to believe—but no, that cannot be!" added she, with a ghastly smile. "Speak, Christian!—for I can hear—though, probably, not be able soon again to answer you."

Christian now felt, that since he had been precipitated thus far, it was mercy to them both to reveal the whole truth. And from beginning to end, but briefly, he told the history of the vow his father's dying testament had exacted; and that he had taken it to the full.

"And so be it kept!" cried she. She uttered this when his agitated pause shewed he had finished speaking; and with the words, reopening the eyes she had held closed during the whole torturing recital, turned them on him with a yet more profound expression of her soul's devotedness, than any which had shone through them before. Her hands now pressed his, and to her heart.

"Christian!" added she, with solemnity, "Heaven has sanctified your vow. Taking from it all cause of regret, it becomes a sacrifice, I may say, without bloodshed. For, without the severing stroke, your tenderness feared to give, I

am withdrawn! And thus," cried she, looking upwards, "the sting of death to me is doubly pointless."

Christian essayed to answer; but in the moment he would have spoke, he observed her eye-lids quiver from the fixture of her gaze; her lips moved, as if articulating words he could not hear; and a convulsive shivering ran through her whole frame. He started up, and put his arms around her. He tried to call aloud, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He bent down his head in distraction, and touched her brow with his cheek. It was marble cold.

"Adelheid!—Adelheid!" at last burst from his lips.—"Oh, my God! grant me thy mercy!—She is dying."

She looked up. Her eyes again fixed themselves on his. She smiled with a peace ineffable.

"No; this is not death!" murmured she, in a low, interrupted, tender voice.

"Death is what I feared just now — the alienation of your heart. With that there were no hope! — no memories to comfort! But now I shall live there! — And in the life to come — in His presence! Christian, we shall meet, to part no more!"

She rose from her seat as she spoke, and hung on him with her arms. "Lead me into that room," added she, in yet more broken tones; "I shall never leave it again! — Nor you will not quit me? — My eyes would gaze their last on thee! Then, my father, my mother, receive your orphan child!"

How Christian obeyed, he knew not. But the moon shone that night in at the uncurtained window of her chamber, upon his pallid face, as it leant upon the clay-cold arm of his best beloved. The venerable protectoress of the last days of her youth, held her palsied hand upon the fair eye-lids that never were to unclose again.

"I go — but soon may return like that —" his eyes were yet rivetted on her cold remains — "then bury me by her side!"

These words were said to the minister of the Abbey by Christian, as he tore himself from the chamber at sun-rise. His horses were at the porch-door.

"Mansfeldt!" cried he, as he threw himself into his saddle, "now I come to thee!"

CHAP. XIV.

He whom Christian thus apostrophised in the anguish of a heart he believed tasked to its uttermost, was no other than that Ernest of Mansfeldt, whose eulogium the forest-master had made with such soldierly admiration to Duke Ernest and the cavalier, — was no other than that cavalier himself.

Generous, frank, and valiant; those very qualities which proved his true blood with some, or at least obliterated its stain with others, became *brilliant traitors to him;* exciting their envy, to strike the noble coat of honour his virtues made his own, with the bar of bastardy. — Hence, from the moment the name of his father was attached to the glory of his actions, these disparaging gazetteers, affecting to make a necessary

distinction between him and some spurious sons of a distant branch of the family of Mansfeldt, base as they were base born, branded the truly noble Ernest with the title already repeated from the lips of Spielberg. — But then, and afterwards, *le fameux bâtard de Mansfeldt* did indeed blot out, again and again, that disgraceful designation, not only with the blood of his country's enemies, but with his own brave stream; shed for a prince, and a people, who acknowledged the service with their proudest honours.

Like his father, the celebrated Pierre Count Mansfeldt of Huldregan, born and educated a Catholic, he possessed the tolerant spirit of a real Christian. — But he might well be said to have inherited that virtue; it having been a guide of his actions, long before he knew his father, to adopt it from his example. Count Mansfeldt of Huldregan, the patrimonial chief of all of that name, powerful in territory and alliances, in

early life was the personal friend of many of the Protestant princes; and when the empire attacked opinions with arms, he rather carried his in opposition to the impious barbarities of the east, than followed the fanaticism of the day, in its sanguinary arguments against the errors of his friends and countrymen at home.

During that inroad of the Turks upon the Hungarian frontier, the Mussulman lines were forced by the Germans; and in the tumult, a beautiful Greek lady, found in the pacha's tent by a band of Croats, was rescued from their violence by the hand of Huldregan himself. — Her story, when told, proved her something more than the usual order of captives trafficked in those countries, where unrestrained license from the code of Mahomet seizes female helplessness with as little remorse as any other spoil.

She was born of a noble Greek family, who,—

On the cowering of Cesar's eagle
To the pale-faced moon ——

the subjugation of Constantinople by the Crescent, retired with their wealth, and their altars to Walachia. There, becoming naturalized, and intermarrying with the native vayvodes, or chiefs of the land, more than one Walachian prince of the mingled blood of Cantacuzene and Rhaddo Dracula, commanded the civil and military polity of this still fine country of the ancient Dacians. But when the Ottoman fire-brand spread to Walachia likewise, this brave race perished with their swords in their hands, leaving only one scion of its once vast root; Dracula, the father of Athenais, the beautiful captive of Huldregan. His last bed too, was made in the bloody field. A report of his daughter's extraordinary beauty had reached the ears of a troop of Turkish marauders, collecting by purchase or plunder, female slaves for their master's harams. His little

domain was attacked, and the prize obtained; but not till both himself, and his only son fell in her defence. The father was slain on the spot; but the son, Michael Dracula, though left covered with wounds, and supposed dead, survived by an almost miraculous preservation, to avenge in after years the horrors of that day.

Athenais, believing that all she loved lay under the burning ashes of her home, was hurried away in an almost stupified state, to the scene of her future fate.—She was sold to an agent of the Pacha of Bosnia, and carried to his camp.—But on the very night of her arrival, when his admiration drove her to despair, the Christians burst into his lines, and she met a double rescue by the arms and generosity of their leader. Woe to that leader, who afterwards gave her cause to say she did not always find it so!—Ever too susceptible to the soft charms of woman's society, when he found them, as now, united with perfect beauty, the

attraction became irresistible; and he lost every other consideration in compassing their possession to himself.—Not indeed every consideration without an exception; for an equal sensibility, to what he called the purity of his honour, would not allow him to even think of espousing one who, though nobly born and spotless in herself, had ever been known as a purchased slave in a Turkish haram. So far the principle might become a kindred spirit with him who had declared, "it was not enough, Cesar's wife should be pure, she must be unsuspected!"—But Huldregan's proud honour lacked the nobleness that would have saved her from himself.

Alone in the wide world, with no other human being to protect her and sooth her griefs, her young heart became his, with a love and trust that put her wholly in his power.—It was the sting of his after life, that he did not use that power more worthy of the innocent

confidence she reposed: then, he felt he had really sullied the purity of his honour, when he made her's the victim to its imaginary behests. — And when a living proof of her shame appeared in the birth of a son, who, should he live, would inherit the stigma of both parents on his name, be it ever so irreproachable from himself, then she prayed to die, and be forgotten as the author of his existence. — But Count Huldregan's remorse was to be yet more rigorously excited. — When time rolled on, and that son became the glory of his father's grey hairs, he would have given worlds to have called him the legitimate representative of his race. — And even meanwhile, when the young mother expired in a convent at Malines,—to which holy place she had withdrawn herself, soon after her lord was brought from the east to take a high command in the Netherlands,— that lord would have poured his proudest blood upon her grave, could it

have washed her stains away, or cleansed his own conscience to the purity of her comparative sinless penitence.

But the immediate shock which burst the last feeble link to life in the breast of Athenais, was information that her brother yet lived, and uncertain of her fate, was seeking her every where. — He had been made prisoner when found alive; had been sold into Egypt; had acquired wealth there, by the bequest of a Mamaluke whom he served. — He had then made his escape with the gold, so many were ready to wrench from the grasp of a Christian, whom they would not permit to ransom himself; and, with all a brother's love and honour prompting him, he traversed land and sea, to find and redeem his sister. — Could she have announced her preserved innocence with her life, she would have hastened to that generous brother; but now she considered herself unworthy of his sight; unworthy the father, who had died in

her defence; unworthy the scars her brother yet bore in his body for her. — She could not survive the conviction that followed these thoughts; and her soul, loathing the beautiful prison which had tarnished its whiteness, yet with an angel's love weeping the sin of him who had betrayed her, (for the tenderness of such pity sullies no human heart!) with those mingled sorrows of the true Magdalen, her gentle spirit fled to the footstool of her God.

The child of her dishonour was left in a monastery adjoining the convent where she died; and by her desire, he was to be brought up in ignorance of his birth, until the moment should arrive, when it would be of no other consequence than to determine his disgust to the world. To decide this object, which was indeed the oblivion of his parents' transgression, in his monastic vows, she bequeathed him a *cross of Palestine*, never to be separated from his breast; and accompanied

it with a letter, to be opened by him at the age of seventeen, when it might be expected he would begin his noviciate.

The day came, and its secret unfolded to the astonished Ernest the lamentable history of his maternal ancestors; the disgrace of his birth; and all the after events, which sunk his mother to the grave. Before the letter was half read, his head was in a whirl of recollections, his heart was amazed, pierced, and bewildered. Like the young Prince of Israel, even at the altar, the future soldier had been taught his lesson for fields he never dreamt to see. Ernest had read in the convent library, of the patriot's zeal, the warrior's enterprize; and comparing himself with those around him, he had oftened wondered at his own comments, and the emotions that stirred within him. But on reading the history of his mother, all seemed explained. He found the spirit in his bosom, which had so long panted to serve God, by serving

his fellow-creatures, rather than drone out existence in solitary meditations! — that it was not, as he had thought, the offspring of a poor but brave follower of the great Count Huldregan: — he was that Huldregan's son! and by a maternal race, hardly less celebrated in military glory! This revealed, all that lately appeared so strange in his bosom, seemed no longer discordant with his origin; but pointing direct to the wonted purposes of his blood. Yet — he shrunk at the recollection! — In him, that blood was contaminated! The double stream was not his by a legitimate claim! The offspring of both, he was the heir of neither!

"Still," cried he, "the dishonour that made me base-born, has not defiled my soul. It shall one day prove my right to my father's name; or win me back my mother's, in avenging the wrongs of her captive country."

He remembered to have seen his father

several times since her death. But then he looked on him with reverence alone, that distant homage due to the illustrious chief, whom he believed the benefactor of his deceased parents. When they last met, Ernest was hardly ten years of age; and he now recollected having withdrawn from his presence with something of offended feeling, perhaps pride, from an idea that his own grateful advances had been received with an unusual degree of haughty sternness.

But had the son of Athenais been then able to read what really dictated the grave demeanor of the brave Huldregan, he would have seen the rigor of self-blame; conscious to the guilt of having allowed the birth of the noble boy before him, to be under circumstances of future shame to both; a boy, whose princely figure, and lofty sentiments, made this father wish, yet fear, to dissuade him from the secluded destiny, his mother's tears had conjured might be his. Hul-

dregan had given his promise to this effect, in her dying hour; nay, pledged it on the crucifix she held towards him; that he would never attempt to draw the evidence of her dishonour to the light of day; not indeed to screen her shame, but to spare the honour of her brother.

In obedience to this, he never indulged the yearnings of his heart to embrace Ernest as his son; but he ever shewed him the most parental interest in the quality of his supposed father's friend. Still, however, the restraint necessity obliged him to impose upon his feelings, to act his part at all, often put so severe a check on the rest, none were visible, excepting coldness and reserve. Something of this was the distressing cause when the count, on being summoned to a more distant quarter of the empire on a long train of duties for the country at large, with a pang like unto death in his own bosom, went to the monastery, to take

what he might call a last farewell of his son; for by the time he could return into that part of the empire again, Ernest would have cut himself off from all worldly communion, by his monastic vow. But the youth—mistaking the more than usual abstracted, and severe deportment of his benefactor,—with a full heart, at the repulsion he thought he had received, had disappeared from the apartment, even at the moment his father might have indulged himself with one parting embrace. The count refrained from having him recalled, and he saw him no more. Yet still, as guardian of the boy, year after year, he continued to write to the head of the monastery; and when the time approached for his noviciate, and the disclosure he would meet in his mother's letter, the parent yet more stirred in the veteran's breast; and he himself wrote to his son, to follow up his reading that sacred letter, with one containing all the manly contrition that

became a father, under his past and present circumstances,—mourning his transgression, unavailingly deploring its consequences.

But this evidence of his father's recognition Ernest never received. — The day he read his mother's testamentary paper decided his fate. — Blistered with her tears while writing it, it told him, he had yet a relative in her distant country: — her brother, Michael Dracala, wandering there in search of his lost sister. — At least he was in life, when her breaking heart penned this sad history. — Years had gone by since that was written, and he might be no more. Ernest, on calculating the probabilities against his immediate wishes, thought, that to seek him now, to share the sufferings, or the struggles of that devoted lord, would be out of time. — He was himself ignorant of arms but in theory. — A truce also existed between the Christian potentates and the Ottoman

power; and while that continued, Walachia must sleep in her irons. — "But for Greece!" he sighed bitterly. — "Were her chains to be interminable?"

Extravagant as may appear these soliloquies, made in a lonely little cell, and by a youth with yet the down upon his chin, still of *such stuff, are most noble purposes* — beyond the common measurement! — Need it be said, how the enthusiasm of many single minds, drawn together by the irresistible attraction of some generous sympathy, rally round their object; and, whether in the field or the cabinet, achieve those great results which colder spirits deem impossible, — till they see, and yet obtusely, wonder at!

Ernest, feeling his own incompetency to present himself as any thing more than a novice; in the tracks he now determined should be the paths of his future life, resolved at once to put himself in the only situation where he could learn the

business of war, from its first step to its last,—by actual practice.—The renowned Farnesé was then commanding in the Netherlands from the Catholic powers; and in his army, Ernest now determined to volunteer himself, even as a private soldier; and without other name, than what he had received at the fount. — In the convent, he had been known by that of his birth-place, Tabor in Bohemia. But the time was to come, when he would make that of Mansfeldt, page on those very fields with that of Farnesé.

Meanwhile, aware that hint of his enterprize, to any person in the monastery, would only ensure his detention, he stole away by night; and before the dawn of a second day, was enrolled a cadet, under the brave Prince of Parma.

There, indeed, he was taught a soldier's vigilance; a soldier's hardihood; and all the duties of the camp and field, not in parades only, but by hourly action. Thus in obeying, he learnt to command. —

And when the long truce on the Danube was at last broken by a wild incursion of the neighbouring Tartar chiefs, the usual fierce forerunners of the more disciplined Turks, then Ernest eagerly transferred his voluntary sword from the banks of the Meuse; and found no difficulty in joining the German reinforcements for the East.

There again, he was seen first in the hardest duties; while his peculiar demeanor under all circumstances, "declared the unpretending volunteer to be a noble gentleman!"

Soon after the opening of the campaign, two opportunities for enterprize presented themselves. —Neither escaped him. The first was to seize the great pass of the country. — Perhaps it need not be repeated that this was the post Christian of Luneburg relinquished to him, while he was yet a nameless soldier of fortune; he being even then known by no other appellation than the *brave*

partisan Ernest—a title given to him by his commanders in the Netherlands, for his extraordinary promptitude on service, and quickness of expedient in execution.

On atchieving the first enterprize, he received a confirmed rank in the imperial army. His second, secured a line of stations which, excluding the enemy from their resources, rendered each succeeding victory a lasting advantage. But for himself!—it completed one great aim of his life—it gave him honour, in the eyes of him who had given him being.

Having been appointed to the expedition, and it was in conjunction with Christian of Luneburg, he was told, at the moment of leading up his men to the camisade, that Count Huldregan was a prisoner in the fortress.—He had been brought thither, only the day before, by a piratical band returning across the country from the Adriatic; where they had plundered the vessel he chanced to be in, and seized

himself, in hopes of a great ransom.—Had Ernest owned any thing of the coward in his nature, such information would have manned every nerve.

"Now, my father!" cried he, to himself, "I will win thee!—Heaven speed our swords!" exclaimed he aloud to his men, as he drew his from its scabbard, and pointing to the fortress in the morning's mist, they were to attack, charged onwards. He won it; and with it, his father. He saved him from the sabres of two enfuriated Turks; who would have cut him to pieces, in revenge of their losing his anticipated ransom, the moment they heard the Christian escalade had gained their keep.

Luneburg made his forcible entrance on another quarter; and when both, with united hands, had planted the imperial colours on the battlements, Ernest returned, to report their completed success, to the illustrious, but wounded veteran he

had redeemed. Yet that was not all his errand. — Would he, or would he not, be recognised by his father? — He had beheld with horror, that unconquered arm struck down to impotency by the club of a ruffian, while the scimitars of a hundred seemed pointed at his breast. For though he was a child when he last saw him, yet the noble figure of Count Huldregan could never be forgotten.

On Ernest's re-entrance, covered with dust and blood, and blackened with smoke from the just silenced musquetry, still the brightness of a humane and heroic soul shone through the cloud. — To a soldier's eye he could not have been more nobly clad; and the one he sought, well understood the import of such an appearance. He rose at sight of his preserver; and with the air of a man more accustomed to confer than accept the sort of obligation he had just received, yet with a smile of the most ingenuous

gratitude, expressed his thanks to the early valour which had stepped between his hoary head and the Turkish sabres.

" I have inquired the name of my preserver from the surgeon who bound up my arm," continued he, " but can learn no more, than that of the *brave partisan Ernest!*" —There was a question of grateful interest evident in the tone of the august speaker. Ernest felt at that moment all he was! Derived from that man, yet nothing as from him; but from himself, how did he stand there! — Yet not by himself! — Heaven had blessed the sword which had saved his father.

" Count Huldregan," replied he, with reverence in his agitated voice," I have no other name, than what you heard; and why I have not — that will answer you."

He unclasped the cross of his mother, which always hung at his breast; and putting it into the count's hand, turned from him.

Huldregan looked on it — and other feelings than amazement held him a brief time silent. He knew the cross — he knew to whom it had been bequeathed — he also knew that his son had disappeared from the monastery; and had in vain been sought after, both by the holy brotherhood and his own agents — he had at last, sorrowing, given him up for dead. But this well-known relic, thus presented, by whom could it be, but by that long lost son? And that son no more an object of anxiety; neither a cloistered monk; nor a wandering, aimless fugitive! But a young soldier, covered with early glory; — nay, the benefactor of his father, before he had ever been acknowledged by him in any way, but in that father's heart! With a gush of parental tenderness, with the joy of a parent's pride, he suddenly thrust the relic of his Athenais into his breast, and opening his arms, exclaimed — "Ernest of Mansfeldt! art thou yet alive? I am thy

father!" And with the words he threw himself on his neck.

That embrace was a union for life. The brave, the noble hearts that met there, were indeed son and father. And but for the register, written deep in that father's memory, of the injury which had sunk that son's mother to the grave; but for that eating worm of conscience, which never dies! Huldregan would now have been the happiest of men.

From that hour, however, he seemed to live but in his son. And, acknowledged openly as such, in the field, and at court; the new lustre which his ardent courage added to the ever famous name of Mansfeldt, by which he then became generally recognised, received an attempt at shadow, from the opprobrious epithet with which envy tried to precede it. — To Ernest, this was often poison to his blood; to his father, it was agony unto death. — But as the breath of this malice could only occasionally reach them, the

pangs it inflicted gradually sunk into temporary oblivion, under the satisfaction of a perfect mutual confidence. Thus the son of Mansfeldt, for the first years of his having taken the name, passed from field to field in the service of the Emperor. Sometimes marshalling his father's hereditary troops, under his own revered banner; at other's beneath the eagle standard of the Archduke Matthias; but at all times, wherever the interests of the empire most needed their well-practised arms.

At Prague he was met with as much obloquy as honour; for the more distinctions the Emperor bestowed on him, some for his own sake, and others for his father's, the more intense was the hostility against their object. Many who pretended contempt of *le fameux bâtard de Mansfeldt*, while he remained absent, when he appeared, and shewed himself as eminent in personal superiority as in military character, jealousy completed what rivalry

had begun; — and active, circumventing systems to ruin him, became the bond of union between persons who, otherwise, might have continued in old enmities, and leagues to destroy each other.

Ferdinand of Styria was one of those, who had more than once on the Hungarian frontier suffered in comparison with this *base-born adventurer*, as he affected to call him; and in the mood of his revenge, he had it whispered by his emissaries, — "That no wonder Count Huldregan's spurious son had returned scatheless from the wars — since his mother, who was an Indian sorceress, had endowed him with a magic sword; and by her spells, rendered his body invulnerable."

The peculiar superstitions of the times, made this believed by many; and in more than one battle afterwards, a poisoned bullet was levelled at his breast; which, the legend declared, could never be harmed by lead alone.

But during most of these scenes, Christian of Luneburg shared the same fortune with his friend, wearing the same colours, and keeping so near him in the field, he must have been a good marksman indeed, who could readily discern, and find the moment when to hit the one breast distinct from the other. — Similar dispositions united them at the first; and while others deemed their honours eclipsed by the successes they dared not emulate, these twain, running side by side in the brightness of reciprocal emulation, thought neither had atchieved any thing till both were masters of an equal advantage. — The fellowship of the soul was theirs; and circumstances daily opened new occasions for this parallel career. — One in particular, as the peculiar object of Mansfeldt's dearest anticipations, may be selected here, from the many recorded by the old chronicler in his annals of those occasions; and it is the only one which shall bring its story of the past, to interfere again with

an instant return to Christian, and the sad moment the reader left him at the gate of Helmstadt.

During one of the campaigns in the east, Walachia rose against the oppressions heaped upon her by her tyrants. — Mansfeldt, sanctioned by his commander the archduke, gladly embraced the opportunity of freeing her from the Turkish yoke. — He carried with him orders, that should he discover Michael Dracula, and in circumstances of mind and body adequate to the trust, he should reinstate him in the rights of his ancestors. — Dracula was discovered; and at the head of a determined band of true Dacians, sworn to free their country; or, like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, leave an imperishable example in the attempt. — Mansfeldt and his heroic kinsman met. — Their armies united; and measures were soon concerted that baffled all the force and fraud of the enemy.

Meanwhile, Huldregan, with the pale spectre of Athenais ever hovering near him, dictating restitution to her country, if not to herself — anxiously threw his veteran spirit into the same interest; and negociating between the Emperor and the Sultan, brought the latter to yield all future claim to a province he could no longer hold. — The day was then gained. — And Ernest Mansfeldt had at last the bosom satisfaction of seating the truly noble brother of his mother in the station of her ancestors. — Michael, from an information he had received some years before, believed that she had perished in the Pacha's tent; and Ernest never explained that it was otherwise. — Therefore, when he bound his uncle's brow with the ancient circlet of the first Dracula, the restored prince had no idea that he received it from the son of his lost sister.

Christian had shared with his friend that expedition, and the sacred motives

that gave it double interest; hence, there he always made his movements secondary to those of Athenais' son. — But when all was sealed in peace in that quarter of the globe, still the true swords of the conquerors were not to rust, while the cry of an oppressed reached them.

In those turbulent times, when truth struggled with error, and the voice of common equity between man and man ceased to be heard by the ear of power; when the cry of the helpless, for mercy, was answered by anathema and murder — then the brave and generous of the sixteenth century, like the good knights of old, felt it the commission of their birthright, to arm in defence of the oppressed. — Then individual valour attempted, in narrow space, what just and comprehensive law has now accomplished for collected nations. Force may maintain the rights of individuals, but law is the defence of all: — and to rear this universal bulwark, or maintain its strength

when raised, the whole chivalry of the two friends was devoted. On this principle, Christian passed on to the tents of Navarre; and thither Mansfeldt soon followed him. But a summons from Huldregan recalled his son to nearer interests at home — Interests, vital to Germany. Its voice met Christian on his return from France. Its voice seemed to claim him from the death-bed of her he had resigned for his country; — to harness himself again for the field, wherever the mysterious import of the recall, his friend had promised to explain, should conduct his world-wearied feet.

CHAP. XV.

Of all that Christian endured, in utter desolation of loneliness, when he tore his eyes from the last glimpse of Helmstadt's once happy towers, — the sad chronicle of this part of his life records very scantily. The historian is not a seer, to scan what passes in the shut bosom; and Christian never told the griefs of his, to the annalist, — a faithful servant in his train, on that melancholy journey.

But from the hour in which he turned his back upon that abbey, now the tomb of all he had once sought there with such confidence of bliss, he became a new character to the eye of all who beheld him — nay, even to himself; for he thought the change real. Before the event under that roof; before he

was called on to receive his father's last sigh, and reading its record, to resign her; before he breathed the vow, that accorded obedience; what countenance had been more luminous with expected happiness than his? But when it was reversed, and all was to be relinquished; when he repaired to her presence to tell her so; what then were the distractions in his breast; — the pangs convulsing every feature, in the agony of anticipated separation? in the agony of clasping her dead in his arms! — Now, his breast was hushed; his face, sad and serene. But it was the depth, the amplitude of his grief, that made him suppose all was calm. And it was calm; for the struggle was over. But the wreck lay under that tranquil sea; and when he looked inward, he saw the destruction of his fondest hopes at the bottom of his soul.

On parting with Mansfeldt on the southern boundary of the Hartz, (where that friend, who had long been seeking

him, imparted the fatal summons home, which had now consigned him to a wanderer's life,) Christian appointed to meet him again, in some near spot, when the event at Celle should be decided. The old fortress at the foot of the Brochen was named for the place of rendezvous. And all being indeed over, both at Celle and Helmstadt, to this mouldering war-work of other times, Christian, on the morning he left the latter place, turned his steps. The ride was long and dreary; long, for he never slept on it; and dreary, because the desert was in his heart.

When he came in sight of his native mountain, (for in that very fortress his mother had been overtaken by her pains, and bore him there!) when he beheld its broad shadows darkening the path he was to pursue, he could not but feel how that clouded hue corresponded with his present state. "Yet," said he, inwardly, "the sun will again rise in the east!

There, my country, thou shalt possess me wholly!"

On his rejoining Mansfeldt, he spoke of his father with a composure, in discussing many of his testamentary plans, that surprised even himself; but he never named Adelheid. This friend alone knew the secret of his love for her. And to him alone, when he should have the self-command, he intended ever to reveal their parting hour. But that moment never seemed to come to him. To reason on this blow, was at present beyond his power. To submit, was his duty; and he did so; being indeed conscious that nothing happens to man by chance. And he implicitly trusted the Almighty hand, that guided his bark through the light and darkness. But human nature will yet shrink in the tempest; and not daring to turn his eyes, even in thought, to where the waves closed over the treasure of his life, he had scarcely finished recapitulating the solemn events

in his paternal castle, before he forced a smile on his countenance. But it was that of the shrouded sun, seen one moment dimly through a misty cloud, and the next lost in the denser heavens. — "Come," said he, "Mansfeldt! — now tell me, why we are here? and whither we are going. I am ready to start, for the east or the west!"

Mansfeldt replied, by informing him, that the object of Count Huldregan's summons, was to impart to him personally, what he dared not trust to paper — a formidable conspiracy forming at Prague; and which, if not stopped at the spring-head, must, in its progress, throw the empire back into all the horrors of intestine commotions. Ferdinand of Styria was the source of this mischief. And the Archduke Matthias, being on his duty at one or other of his governments, had left the ground open to his rival. Huldregan's occasional absences also, from the Bohemian capital, had

given still more opportunity to the ambitious prince, to make the impressions he desired on the now greatly enfeebled mind of Rodolph. Accordingly, by the aid of certain Jesuits, he alarmed the conscience of the old monarch on account of his past life; declaring, "that one especial feature of it, his continued indulgence to the heretical principalities, was the real cause of all the misfortunes of his reign. And the proof was now conspicuous, by a present signal judgment! namely, some recent cruelties of the Turks, committed on the Croatian frontier by a sudden irruption of that people on the anniversary of Rodolph's solemn recognition of the impious Protestant sanction, called *the Peace of Religion!* Such an unexpected, and unprovoked inroad, with all its consequences, on so notable a day, could not but be considered as intended to warn Germany, of Heaven's wrath against the apostacy in her own bosom." And every

messenger from the east bringing fresh accounts of the Mussulman's rapid successes; with such refinements on barbarism, perpetrated on the miserable towns and villages they sacked and destroyed, it appeared, he said, as if their last discomfiture and granted peace, had only been to renew their strength; resting on their arms, to rise, like Antæus, more terrific from their fall.

Fortune, therefore, seemed to favour the subtilties of Ferdinand; who, founding his false argument on the aggressions of these savages, also made quelling them a means of ruining one half of his Christian countrymen. Meanwhile Matthias, as soon as he heard of the invasion, marched from Presburgh with a hastily collected army, to check its progress; but to his amazement, he found the enemy in great force, and already masters of some of the most important stations on the frontier.

The night his dispatches with this in-

formation arrived at Prague, they were discussed by the Emperor and his evil councillors, in the library of the Clementine College of Jesuits, under sealed doors; and there Ferdinand opened his secret plans to the intimidated Rodolph, *for the effectual counteraction*, as he termed it, *of the spirit on those frontiers*; namely, the destruction of heresy at home. And a well-taught agent from Rome seconded the measure, by promising him the salvation of his empire here, and his own salvation hereafter, in the event of his either converting, or duly punishing its apostate members. — To effect this, it was proposed to the monarch, to send accredited messengers to the Protestants of Germany; not only to demand the usual quota of troops on such emergencies, but to negociate for additional succours; and to be headed by the flower of their nobility. "It would be easy to flatter the military spirit of their refractory youth, to any crusade,"

remarked the nuncio, "whether on the side of the Cross or the Crescent! For men brought up on their principles, know none steadily, but rebellion."

"When the principalities are thus drained of their natural guardians, then" Ferdinand observed, "will be the time for Rodolph to repeal the sacrilegious act which has drawn such judgments on the land; and to follow it up with every energy in the imperial and papal arm, to bring all Germany again within the jurisdiction of Rome."

It was then agreed on all sides, that if the old princes at home did not bow to the rod, their sons would then be in the power of the Emperor amidst his armies, or detained in their way at Prague; and sequestration could promptly throw the territories and wealth of their fathers, into hands that better knew how to use them.

"Yes, my friend!" continued Mansfeldt, with a smile of noble scorn, "there

are some high-born, low-soul'd creatures of this Ferdinand, in boot for all your saddles. Such, indeed, is his intended exchequer, to excite, or to repay the base ambition he suborns to his service! But these are not the only unworthy means with which he hopes to compass the throne of the Cæsars—for that is his aim!"

Christian started from the moveless fixture of attention with which he had been listening to the foregoing.—"What!" cried he, "treason against Matthias?"—and a flash of surprised indignation, threatened from his frowning eye.

"Hear me to the end!" replied Mansfeldt: "and you shall be made aware of a train—to arm these rocks against the dark conclave in that chamber!"

Christian resumed his seat. But his countenance was changed from its former sad calmness. His complexion fluctuated with the information his friend continued

to give, and his eye often told his commentary to the narrator.

Mansfeldt repeated certain discourses of Ferdinand and his partisans, to impress Rodolph first with doubts of his brother's real affection for him; and those having taken effect, they brought forward insinuations against the sincerity of his zeal, whether in opposing the followers of the Koran, or in adhering himself to the doctrines of the true church. One or two armistices granted to the Turk during the late war, were advanced in proof of his favour in that quarter; and the influence, Rodolph was brought to acknowledge he had used over him in behalf of the Protestants, seemed as fully sufficient evidence of the other. Then came the conclusive charge, to be raised on these foundations; namely, that the archduke depended on the popularity he had thus gained with the empire at large, for his first step to the imperial throne; counting on the suffrages of the incon-

siderate part of the Catholics, in respect to the splendor of his victories. "The present state of Croatia," Ferdinand remarked, "proves them, however, more dazzling than solid!" On the Protestants he relied, because he had found means to apprise them, that all the toleration they had acquired under this reign proceeded originally from himself. These united influences, he expected, would hasten the partial affection of his brother to confer on him the title of King of the Romans; and then the ball would be at his foot.

"To protect these reformists, as he would!" rejoined Ferdinand, with contempt.

"Nay! to make them lords here!" observed a Jesuit, nodding his head significantly; "that nominal sceptre once gained, Cæsar might easily find a shaft for Cæsar!"

Rodolph turned deadly pale; and Ferdinand affected to reprimand the

Jesuit for the enormity of such an insinuation. But such an insinuation, it might reasonably be concluded, would never have been ventured in such a presence, without sufficient sanction; and, consequently, the shade of suspicion, once raised in the monarch's mind, would abide there, and collect, till it blotted out all former confidence.

"Were he indeed to play the *Brute part in the Capitol;* which," (rejoined the nuncio,) may be more execrable in fact than improbable in execution, then we might find the explanation of this extraordinary propitiation of your Majesty's enemies, both in the East and in the West. They would help him to a marvel, in seating himself firmly in the empire. But the archduke is of the blood of our second Charlemagne, and I cannot suspect him!"

Rodolph made few answers to all that was said; but without hesitation, or even examination, subscribed to the papers

they laid before him: — and when the assembly adjourned, the plan their conspiracy had contrived, to ensnare and ruin the Protestants, was ordered to be immediately put in execution.

"My father," observed Mansfeldt, as he concluded, "discovered this intrigue by a most extraordinary accident; an intrigue which possesses every feature of treachery and sacrilege. And thus," continued he, rising with animated indignation, (for Mansfeldt was still a Catholic, as well as his father,) are the best things profaned to the worst purposes! — Ambition makes religion its cloak — tyranny wears the mask of good order — licentiousness, of liberty! — In short, vice, who dare never shew her hideous aspect openly, thus puts on the vizard of virtue, to stab more securely, and finally dishonour the name she has assumed!"

Christian felt, that to meet an enemy in the open field, whatever he might be,

his spirit was prepared. But when the adversary took this shape; to attack in the chicaneries of plots, and slanders; and all the circumventions, never to be guessed at, but by minds with which he had no contact; — he felt his situation altogether new. At sea, without a pilot, in shoals and quicksands! — The experience of his father had given Mansfeldt a deeper lesson; and while fully entering into the generous abhorrence his friend declared, against all creeping and cringing politics, all serpentine tracing of the reptile movements of Ferdinand and his emissaries; he explained such a plan of comprehensive counteraction laid down by Count Huldregan, — secret, indeed, in part, but the secrecy of discretion, not the mystery of intended imposture, — that Christian could not but embrace the whole scheme, and warmly acknowledge to Mansfeldt, the foresight and wisdom of his father.

Huldregan had indeed lost no time

in seeing, and concerting measures with the archduke: and the result was, Mansfeldt having been dispatched on the private mission of warning, and consequent advice to the Protestant states of Germany, on which he was met by Ernest of Luneburg; and which he now communicated to Christian, before they were jointly to fulfil the enjoined embassy to the rest, with the whole weight of the political and military fame of them both.

"Rather the weight of the facts themselves!" answered Christian; "they speak for themselves. We have only to be believed; and who dare doubt us?"

"That none can, if they wished to dare it," returned Mansfeldt, "proves the efficacy of our being sent, and jointly; one a Catholic, the other a Protestant. — And, as you observe yourself, who but must believe the suffrage of two men, who have never yet been known to fear any man?"

"The only man I ever knew, to fear!" sighed Christian inwardly, "was Christian's self. — But that is over!" — So he then thought: — but man must be in his grave, before that boast can be made with safety. — Christian sighed, when he uttered the belief; and that sigh might have told him, all within him was not yet marble. Though when plunged indeed into the crowding occupations necessary to the prosecution of their present views, and on which they set forward the succeeding day, he might at last have supposed he had ceased to remember any softer meditation. — But there is, what the soul never can forget. And one tender image, sometimes smiling on his arm, but most often expiring there, visited his slumbers nightly. — Aye, for years after! and his sealed heart, from that period refused even a passing admiration of any other woman's form.

The morning shone with the most glowing hues of refulgent autumn, when he issued from the twilight of his crenelled apartment, into the full sun glancing its level beams on every sylvan object in the green court-yard of the old fortress. He looked up, as he mounted his horse, and thought, how more in unison with the sad scenes just past with him, was the sombre chamber he had left, than this gay apparelling of nature. Yet when he and Mansfeldt rode forth on their journey, and he saw the reapers in the distant fields of the forest; the hay-makers in the meadows; nay, even the sheep and the kine grazing amongst them; the grape gatherers, thronging round their vines; the hamlets busy in every species of joyous industry: then this native prince of the rural kingdom, he once expected to have been in part his own allotment, exclaimed to himself — "and it is mine! for I go to defend it. Blessed

union of peace, and duty! Feeling I may yet assist in preserving all I see here, does indeed renew the nerve I thought dead in this devoted arm:—happiness, in the career to which I go!"

CHAP. XVI.

TITUS' calendar was now in the hands of the friends, and no day was lost during their progress. Mansfeldt did not return to Heidelberg, the place of general rendezvous appointed by his father and the archduke, without having fully executed his errand. In possessing Christian as his coadjutor, he had secured the master-key of his object; and both worked head and heart together. They visited, in close privacy, the cabinets of the Protestant States of the empire; and having compassed a strong and secret union of interest and means amongst them; when their representatives met the imperial messengers in the august castle of the Palatine of the Rhine, come thither ostensibly to propose the augmented levies; then the power and principle of

this union manifested themselves: — like the letting out of fierce waters, overflowing their supposed limits every where, the indignation of the old hereditary lords of Germany evinced itself. Thorough information of their danger, gave them an eagle's ken into even probable aggressions; and shewed them where to plan their lines of warfare against any infringement of their rights, civil or religious. Respect for the abused sovereign they still loved, was never omitted in their discussions. But all were to recollect, he was only the elected sovereign of a confederacy of sovereigns, who could not become his vassals, without betraying their own subjects to a slavish bondage. — To avenge the past, was not in their creed; but to resist unto death, every new attempt, by edict, or violence, towards similar invasion. And, as a preliminary bulwark, they demanded the redress of certain grievances, which had gradually accumulated on their civil rights, from

the Imperial Chamber; and also required, as a guarantee for every engagement, that before a man of the extra levies should be permitted to pass the Protestant frontiers, a re-assurance of the deed of compact between the Emperor and their princes, entitled the *Peace of Religion*, should be publicly given. It was also resolved, that such demand should be made in the Imperial Chamber, by the mouth of Prince Christian of Luneburg. And now, wholly absorbed in obtaining satisfaction for his country, he did not hesitate at any personal risk to become this daring ambassador. Daring, because the enemies of his cause placed their strength in falsehood, backed by treachery. Mansfeldt's share in rousing the princes to this necessary vigilance, not being to be avowed at that time, he did not appear in the public assembly with the imperial envoys. Christian, there, was the voice of both.

When all was fixed, Mansfeldt pur-

sued his return to Prague, by one route; and the Prince of Luneburg, as the Protestant's ambassador, by another.

When he arrived, he was received with every ostensible respect due to his rank and military fame; and, perhaps there was too much uninvestigating haste in according with the requisitions he brought, for any part of the reception to be sincere.

"Nevertheless," observed Christian, to one who made the objection; "let us accept what we ask, even in the way it is given. We have declared our terms;—and the confidence we shew, if not duly honoured, must double the disgrace of the evil councillors, who may dare the iniquity hereafter of urging their master to the violation of this compact."

This renewed pledge of his faith to the Protestants, was, however, made by Rodolph with a pale countenance; every moment looking round on Ferdinand, as if for encouragement to steadily utter the premeditated treachery. Ferdinand stood

restrained, and haughty; well knowing the part he had to play, while using his sovereign as his puppet. On the Mansfeldts, he at times cast his eye with a malignancy that boded their destruction, should he ever sit on the throne then occupied by his cousin. On Christian he looked with the glance of a man who measures the distance between his arm and the breast of an antagonist he fears, should he ever meet him off his guard, and within reach of his dagger.

The document signed, the Prince of Luneburg returned with it to the Protestant assembly at Heidelberg; there to deliver it in safety, previous to his taking his station at the head of the united troops he was to march to the support of the archduke, and the subversion of the invasion on the Croatian frontiers.

Count Huldregan, meanwhile, detained his son at Prague, under a hope of their joint efforts prevailing on the Emperor to

give the only decided pledge that could secure Matthias in his just expectations respecting the reversion of the empire.

Ferdinand, suspecting that such was the veteran's motive; and fearing his still powerful influence over the facile mind of a monarch, who, for years, had been accustomed to consult this very man like an oracle; the Styrian Prince redoubled his arts to detach Rodolph from the conferences he usually sought once a day at least, with the old companion of his youth; and, meanwhile, won upon the infirm mind he cajoled, to privately invest him, and in the secretly sworn presence of the leading Catholic Princes, with the insignia Huldregan hoped to obtain for the rightful presumptive heir.

That done, years and disease seemed too slow in their progress towards dispatching the useless monarch; who, having opened the door of his throne to him he had thus virtually named his successor; that successor and his satellites,

began to think the seat too long encumbered with its present possessor. The impatience of the head was soon understood amongst the members. Plans were laid for clearing the intermediate ground, perhaps a little before the natural period of vacancy! — But what of that? — a faction meditated the crime; — and the crime of a party is easily talked away, as to its hold on individual conscience, by being shifted from man to man; — as if the heinousness of guilt could be lessened, by being redoubled fifty fold, in the accumulated number of its perpetrators.

Of this sort of conscience were the men who embraced the criminal project, for self-aggrandisement. — Some, measuring their obedience to the fifth commandment, according to their reliance on indulgences; while others, knowing no God but their ambition, felt themselves accountable to nothing beyond its gratification. One or two, indeed, whose sense

of a Supreme Being was neither extinguished by the fashion of infidelity, nor blinded with the absurd doctrine which pretended to cancel sin even before it were committed! — these winked hard on the guilt they were about to incur; and being unsettled in their idea of what Providence might or might not take cognizance of; for the sake of what they deemed present advantage, these were content *to jump the life to come!* With regard to Ferdinand himself, if he prompted the demon that urged these three orders of persons to such a conclusion, it was done so dexterously, neither written nor spoken words could have been brought in proof. And ere that moon had waned, whose crescent had seen him in the locked chamber of the Emperor, placed by his royal hands in the chair of the Romans, these affianced traitors marshalled themselves to their work of darkness.

Rodolph, as has been said, was addicted

to all the superstitions prevalent in those days of half light. And none then held the mind in more absurd vassalage, than the general belief, that human knowledge could arrive at a pitch capable of prying into futurity; and also by occult arts, influence the destiny of man to weal or woe. Hence the imperial capital became the resort of impostors of every description; and Rodolph's cabinet of pretended seers, alchemists, necromancers, and astrologers. On one side of the monarch, in his most confidential moments, stood the treacherous professors of a religion, in itself most holy; but over whose pure doctrines they spread a veil of falsehood so thick, no glimpse could be caught of the guiding light beneath. On the opposite quarter, appeared the magi of a worse than pagan blindness, — a horde of wretches, calling themselves worshippers of the true God, yet professing the faith, or practice of witchcraft: in short, a power over nature, known only to di-

vinity, or demons. But *by their fruits, ye shall know them!* And as these inchanters were rarely sought to conjure good, though often hired to inflict evil, it may easily be inferred under whose inspiration and potency those personages were presumed to act. Some of these men had been used to further the designs of Ferdinand. Bringing forward their astrological observations, to implicate the loyalty of Matthias, by throwing out hints of a fatal ascendancy his natal star seemed to have over a kindred horoscope, which ought to keep the zenith. Alarmed and bewildered, the monarch flew from these dreamers, to his councillors; and their dark insinuations daily distilling into his ears the poison prepared by his rival, the tale of mystery was soon made to point to its object.

Thus, bigotted denunciators on the one hand, and tricks of magical delusion on the other, crazed the faculties of the betrayed Rodolph. Every where around,

he saw nothing but visions of eternal torments, menacing his former toleration of the doctrine of mental freedom; nothing but threatened treasons from the ungrateful advocates of the liberties he had guaranteed; — and ever deeming the fatal events, ready to fall on him which all his oracles united in prophesying, he as constantly passed from one soothsayer to another, to enquire the approach of the evil, and, if possible, to avert it a little longer.

While Count Huldregan held any sway over the unhappy monarch, the constitutional gloom of his mind was cheered away; and consequently, his proneness to these superstitions kept in check. Then, their high-priests were content to lurk, from public view at least, in the distant alleys of the city. But when Ferdinand seized the reins, and he did it completely during Huldregan's private journey to the archduke, darkness and dread, and all the fiends of Endor,

seemed at once let loose on the appalled victim of duplicity ; — already too eager to admit as a resource, what, like the upas tree, shed its bane on his senses and his life.

To invest these occult personages with a redoubled air of mysticism, even when sanctioned by a tacit patronage from the great men of the court, they usually took up their residence in that remote part of the city called Wischerad ; — where the ruinous purlieus of the ancient and dilapidated palace of the old Bohemian ducal reign, afforded many a winding labyrinth, to lead, appallingly, to their den-like lodgings. And this quarter of the town besides, had legends well worthy the spirits that dwelt there. In days of old, Libusie, a princess and a sorceress, held her nightly revels in a chamber, the remains of which yet threw their black shadows down the acclivity of the deserted ducal residence. While Horymir, a cavalier of no less note in necromancy

and arms, spurred his horse over the Muldau, at no great distance from the beautiful witches tower, alighting on the other side, after a leap of nearly a thousand paces! Winding along by the parapet where the wizard knight is supposed to have sprung his steed, extends a narrow gloomy road; — on one side lies, or rather glides, the river, behind the low embattled wall; on the other appear the scattered remains of old tenantless buildings; diverging in various directions, to the obscure alleys, which might then aptly be called the college of dæmonoly.

Through those dark labyrinths, one night, or rather in the dusk of a dreary November evening, Rodolph was returning alone in his carriage, (always a plain one, and with a single servant only, when on those expeditions), from the house of a newly-arrived and famous astrologer, who had taken up his abode in one of the deepest ravines of the Wischerad. At this favourable oppor-

tunity, watched by the conspirators, when the carriage came in front of a low gateway leading from some ruins, a posse of armed men, with crapes over their faces, rushed forward and stopped the horses. Others dragged the servant from behind, while the rest opened the door of the vehicle to dispatch their victim.—At the moment of the arrest of his carriage, and the instantaneous sight of the assassins' weapons gleaming at the window, the Emperor guessed their intention, and sunk fainting at the foot of the seat. The clash of arms sounded in his ears above him; and he knew no more, till he found himself stretched on a couch in a strange apartment, covered with blood, though not his own. The body of the venerable Count Huldregan was lying before him, extended on the floor; with his brave son, bleeding also, kneeling beside him.

On Rodolph opening his eyes, they fixed on this dismal sight; and raising

himself on his elbow, he asked of the physicians who surrounded him, what had happened? Who had saved him from the murderous weapons, under which he had expected to breath his last? And why he saw the Mansfeldts now near him, and in a case so like what he had just apprehended would have been his own?—His heart smote him at the moment; for both had for some time been excluded, on various vain pretences, from his accustomed presence.

The answer was brief.—

The count and his son, being on their return from the country on that side of the town; having also some followers with them; happily came up at the very juncture, when the Emperor's life hung on the fate of an instant — the swords of the conspirators pended over him. — The situation of the carriage, and those who beset it, were sufficient to shew a bloody deed was intended to its inmate; and ere the weapons of the murderers

had time to strike the royal victim, the pistol of Mansfeldt had rid the world of one of them; a poniard he wrenched from the dying wretch, did its work with the rest; for in such close contest he could only use short weapons. But his father, meanwhile, who at the moment of their first attempt at rescue, had opened the opposite door of the carriage to draw the Emperor out at that side — was struck through the back in several places, by some of the party, who left the horses heads on perceiving the attack on their comrades. Huldregan did not fall immediately, but turned on his enemies. Mansfeldt was then in full conflict with the remainder of the villains; whom he had made leave the insensible body of their sovereign, to defend their own lives. The combat was short; for on seeing one of their company dead, and others bleeding, a dread of discovery seized their leader; and pronouncing the concerted word for retreat,

the corpse of their late partisan was instantly snatched from the ground; and by as simultaneous a retrograde movement, the whole party fled through the old gateway, and were immediately lost to sight amongst the ruins.

Mansfeldt ordered a pursuit; but Count Huldregan dropping, while he spoke, his servants loved their master too well, even to obey his son, when he seemed to require their assistance. Mansfeldt, not instantly perceiving the situation of his father, had returned to the carriage to examine into the real state of Rodolph. He found him motionless, indeed, but neither dead nor wounded, yet covered with blood. The desperate encounter of daggers over his body, brief as it was, would account for that: Mansfeldt's hands and face were gashed, and bleeding profusely. He had scarcely assured himself that all was well with the monarch, at least that he was only in a swoon, when the cries of the

servants, on perceiving the wounds of their master, (who, though having dropt from a sudden failing of his limbs, was attempting to rise again), resounded from the other side of the vehicle. Mansfeldt, alarmed, instantly passed round; and seeing the condition of his father, at once comprehended the calamity which now pended over himself.

"How is the Emperor?" enquired the veteran, as his son stooped towards him.

"Safe," was the reply; "but my father! — you are heavily wounded?"

"Where, I never expected to be!" returned the count, with a noble smile: — "The villains took me in the back! — Thanks to God for the Emperor's escape! He must give me passage home."

Mansfeldt had seen thousands dying and dead around him, friends and foes, but he never before felt a pang like this; for now, he recognised the well-known insignia of man's last hour, in the pecu-

liar paleness of his father's visage; in the darting gleam of his eye; where the intrepid soul yet looked out, full of unimpaired vigour even in the moment its mortal tenement was shattered to ruins. Thus, indeed, asserting its imperishable nature, and looking upwards, to the life beyond the grave.

"But, to fall by an assassin, my father!" cried his son, in the bitter anguish of the moment.

"Not uselessly, Mansfeldt!" returned he, in the same heroic voice, "therefore not ingloriously!"

Mansfeldt staunched the wounds of his father with their joint scarfs; and raising him to the carriage with a gentle movement, placed him by the side of the still lifeless Rodolph. The vehicle was then made to move slowly on, till it brought both its sacred charges to the house of Count Huldregan; it being nearer to the fatal place of rencontre, by some streets, than the imperial palace.

Thither medical assistants were speedily summoned, and certain officers of state, to attend their yet insensible sovereign.

While the outline of this relation was briefly told the monarch, by an attendant, the scene of life was quickly closing over the eyes of his preserver. Rodolph heard the short, convulsive grasp of expiring nature; and with feelings honourable to himself, slid from his couch, and hurried with a faultering step to the side of Huldregan, exclaiming, "Is he not my friend, that dies for me?" Then throwing himself on his knee, opposite the kneeling son, while his heart smote him with recollection of their long friendship, — of the insidious envy which had wrested his confidence from one so tried, he cried again, in bitterness of soul, "Oh, Pierre! who has done this thing between thee and me? — Can it be him they tell me of — when I find thee thus? — Pierre, speak to me!"

Huldregan struggled for utterance,

but could only grasp his sovereign's hand.

Rodolph continued, with an almost phrenzied energy; "Kiss this cross from your son's breast," cried he, holding forward the iron-bound relic that always hung there. "Oh, press it to your dying lips, if my brother be sincere to the church! if he be faithful to me!"

Huldregan clasped the cross, and the hand that held it, to his lips together. — They were then almost cold; and his closing eyes hardly glimmered over them. Mansfeldt, speechless as his father, knelt, gazing on him.

"This blood — this sign — testifies in both, for thee! friend of my youth, whom my age hath treated like an enemy! Therefore, without sin, I may yet honour the hand that saved my life! and gives me back my brother. This investiture of a prince, shall be thine, in life or death!" With the words, the Emperor, his face streaming in tears, put the badge

of such dominion into the grasp of the expiring count. He had taken it from his own bosom.

"My life is now ——" ejaculated the eager father, starting with preternatural energy from the breast of his son, where he lay; and turning his glazing eyes on him with sudden brightness. He could not utter more; but that look spoke the rest.

"He is the legitimate heir of all its honours!" — as eagerly replied the Emperor. For he now saw no other object, but to repay to his utmost, the debt of his own life to his dying friend. "Thus, then," continued he, "I pass my feeble amends to him."

The jewelled badge was scarcely recognised by the hand which now received it. But Huldregan, at that moment of his son's proclaimed legitimacy, and such honourable endowment with the proudest dignity his country could bestow, felt the great load of his life taken from

his soul! To the mercy of God alone, he had now to look for pardon of his sin; its stigma was wiped away amongst men! — The conviction was rapture; was confidence, in the mercy he invoked; and gazing upwards, he exclaimed, with a countenance too eloquent of happiness to speak of death —— "Athenais! I can now behold thee!" —— He pressed his son's hand to his heart: — his eyes closed — and all was still.

CHAP. XVII.

ERNEST was now Count Mansfeldt, with the rank of prince of the Roman empire. But neither titles, nor territory, could compensate to him, for the father he deplored. And, that his father might not have given his life in vain, that the sovereign might not be preserved, only to rivet the chains her enemies were forging for Germany; — this ever watchful patriot, in the midst of his private sorrows, seemed to forget all, in immediately exercising the rights of his new dignity. Not, indeed, in ostentatious display, but to claim his privilege of a daily private audience of the Emperor, until he could obtain a promise from the re-animated fraternal affection in his breast, of ere long publicly proclaiming the archduke his heir; and, as a pledge

of such intention, make him the bearer of certain parts of the insignia, in proof of the future full investiture.

But the scene which passed at the Huldregan palace, was too faithfully represented to Ferdinand, for him to allow its impressions to remain on the mind of Rodolph. Other audiences were sought of him; and the consequence was, whoever were the true or the false, to him it seemed of no avail; for, he dared not use his judgment. His usual black conclave moved around him day and night, and his subjected spirit every hour felt itself more closely rivetted to the foot of Ferdinand. Yet he remembered he was a monarch; and stung with shame, at the double face, the merciless influence of the Styrian faction now compelled him to assume; for he had not courage to confess to a son of Huldredregan, the real vassal state of his mind; he became reconciled to any subterfuge, likely to free him from the presence of

one, whom he deemed at times the apparition of that friend, reproaching him, for now dishonouring his dying evidence.

Hence, when Mansfeldt discoursed with him on the virtues, the services, the rights, of his natural heir; Rodolph had no refuge but to answer him with false smiles, and vague assertions; till at last, from dread of betraying the slave he had become, while thus face to face with a man whose soul was truth and loyalty, he cowardly ended the contest, by giving the solemn promise he knew he could not redeem. Mansfeldt, believing him, withdrew. Time then, did not lag with the eager soldier, in preparing all things for his departure, to join his friend, and the archduke on the frontiers; or rather in the heart of the belligerent country, back into which their successful arms were driving the enemy.

When all was in order for taking leave, the new count, armed for his journey, went to the palace to perform that duty,

and receive the expected entrusted documents. But instead of finding the Emperor alone, as he had been led to anticipate, and so in private have that confided to him, which hereafter was to be avowed to the empire; he found Rodolph surrounded by the partisans of Ferdinand, and that prince himself, sitting in the presence of his sovereign, with a demeanour, needing no other announcement, of the scorn in which he held all likely impediments between him and the imperial chair. Even on Rodolph himself, he cast his proud glances; and when Mansfeldt asked his Majesty's commands for the archduke, the flash of decided hostility to that name, which shot from the Styrian's eyes, and turned again on the cowering visage of his royal master, shewed at once who was the real sovereign there.

Rodolph did not escape the import of that glance, and with something of a paralytic affection agitating his eye-lids,

he remained silent. But Ferdinand's haughty demonstration of his supremacy, was not confined to looks; for, with one of the most disdainful triumph, he threw his sword contemptuously upon the table before the monarch, when Mansfeldt, in a voice which had some remonstrance in the tone at least, repeated the enquiry. Mansfeldt met the action with a glance of fire; for this scarcely covert insult to the noble name just uttered, was sufficient to assure its brave advocate, that the false Styrian had accomplished his long aim of rivalry against the brother of his sovereign. The parasitical smile which ran from face to face of the satellites around, added to the conviction; and a flush of shame, accompanied by an averted, wandering eye in Rodolph, evidently avoiding the direct beam of Mansfeldt's, confirmed him of the whole. He drew coldly, but respectfully back from the monarch.

"Sire," said he, "seeing my answer,

I go to join the archduke, against your enemies — but leave you, in the midst of his."

The dead silence of a general consciousness that all present were at that moment sharing one humiliating confusion of mind, prevailed for a minute or two; and during that visible discomfiture, the indignant speaker calmly withdrew. While passing through the doorway of the anti-room, he heard the pause broken by the Emperor's voice. "What have I done?" cried he, in a sudden burst of half frantic self-accusation — "branded myself for a double-tongued coward, to the bravest man in my dominions! He sees ——"

What he was supposed to have seen, Mansfeldt did not hear. It suited not the open creed of his soul, to obtain even the most important information by eavesdropping. And crossing the gallery to the great stairs, he was soon out of the palace; — and in fact, set forth on his jour-

ney to the frontiers, before the disputants he left in the council-hall, had decided whether he ought not to be immediately arrested for contempt of — majesty! Rodolph felt, that if any were to be arrested for such misprision, the men were before him; and when the discussion ceased, only differing in degrees of malice against the brave absent, the unhappy monarch they professed to honour by it, retired from the mockery of their homage, with the aspect more of a man distressed to idiocy, than that of a sane, and respected prince: so was his heart stricken, and his head distracted, with their various misrepresentations. Their employer sat sternly silent.

But these emissaries of falsehood and of treason, insinuated not only the grossest charges against Mansfeldt, and his decease a father, — whose grave, it might be said, was yet red with the blood he had shed for his sovereign! but the arch-

duke himself did not escape the broader affirmation of their tongues. The recent attempted assassination, was darkly ascribed to his influence; and the Mansfeldts themselves, accused of knowing more of the conspiracy, than might be suspected from the part they appeared to have taken in its disappointment. Rodolph sometimes resisted with argument what was said; but Ferdinand frowned, and he became silent, though not always convinced. At last the Styrian Prince commanded, that the document of the archduke's treason should be shewn.

The doors of the council-chamber were double-bolted, and it was brought forth. —A professed copy of the written circular sent by Count Huldregan to the Protestant States. And which document Bernhard de Saxe had made from the original, he purloined for that purpose in the hall of the Hartz hunting-lodge, and then replaced in the morning without

discovery. Ferdinand, (who still kept this unsuspected spy in his ambuscades) had reserved this piece of his service, until some occasion might seem to demand the stroke; and none had appeared more pressing than the present, to cut off at once the Emperor's lingering remains of affection for Matthias, and of grateful confidence in his two coadjutors.

The hand-writing of the circular was copied, as in fac-simile, from the well-known characters of Count Huldregan; De Saxe taking care to leave vacuum for any additions, that might hereafter be dictated to his pen, of a deeper dye. The original paper had no signatures, unless certain watch-words at the bottom of the letter, might be called such; which the persons to whom they were addressed, by a former understanding of their import, would know how to translate into the names of the individuals, who witnessed the fact recorded in

the paper. These words, or rather impresses, were not understood by the base purloiner of the text; but his employer chose to give them a meaning; and, in completing the document for the purpose he intended it should one day effect, he commanded De Saxe to forge the signatures of the two men he most wished to ruin; — Matthias, his rival in the empire; Mansfeldt, his more than rival in the field.

When Rodolph beheld the paper, and listened to the thousand treasonable, and even contradictory inferences his counsellors built upon it, he became so bewildered, (for he well knew Huldregan's hand,) that turning a vacant eye of universal doubt from side to side, he sat down, gazing strait forward, with his spread hands on his knees, appearing utterly neglectful of what continued to be urged to him. Meanwhile, his own thoughts were busy within, putting these

distracting enquiries to himself, — "What am I become? — Where am I? — With whom? — There is no trust for me! — The old faces I looked on from my youth, are taken away; — dead! — or gone, to lay snares for me; — the new ones, may not be more sincere — and I am as a creature abandoned of his God! — Why is this?" cried he, suddenly aloud, and addressing the nuncio with horror in his looks. — "Can you tell me, whom I have slain? — The mark is on me! — None hold fellowship with me, but to deceive; — to shew me the curse of my doom. — Yes! ye are all my tormentors!"

The company started aghast; and gazed on the half-phrenzied Rodolph with amazement. Not guessing the stream of his thoughts, they could not comprehend the import of the question; and almost, with one mind, attributed to a seizure of madness, the only too sensible appeal of afflicted desperation. Those

who sat, rose without other answer than a low whisper amongst themselves; and Ferdinand, advancing to the monarch, proposed leading him to his chamber, to his physicians.

"Nothing is foretold of their poisoning me!" murmured he, as he tremblingly took the arm of the duke. "But if Huldregan were bribed to connive at my murder, why may not they? — And what awaits me then? — Oh, Ferdinand!" groaned he, and clinging with a terrific tenacity to his arm, "if you can, save me from all these different murderers? — Save me here — save me hereafter! — for now you have left me no friend but yourself! — no confidence — no hope in earth, or heaven!"

Fearful was the look of utter despair that accompanied the adjuration; and with the last word, he dropt his head on the duke's shoulder. The silently exulting contriver of all this misery, now

hoping it would soon finish its work, carried his abused benefactor almost in his arms from the apartment. The door closed upon them; and the synod left behind, drew closer round the table, where the fate of Europe was to be decided.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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